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ABSTRACT

A study was undertaken in the winter and spring quarters of 1980, addressing aspects of the baccalaureate application, admission, advising, and graduation processes at the General College of the University of Minnesota, a nontraditional postsecondary education program. Among the issues addressed were these: the distribution and trends of baccalaureate applicants in the schools and divisions, admissions success ratios, admissions response time, graduation rates in the school and among division, and advising flow and advisor load. Data were drawn from three institutional databases: baccalaureate program information file cards, committee action lists, and graduation lists. The results, presented in narrative and chart form in this report, indicate that 32 percent fewer students applied to the college's baccalaureate programs in the final year of the study (1980) than in its initial year (1976), a fact awating further study. However, the application figure for the final year represented an upswing from the previous year. Admissions success rates were inversely related to application rates, with proportionately more applicants being admitted toward the study's end. Divisional data generally followed the college-wide trends in these areas. However, divisional advising loads were not found to be equitable, with the science, business, and math division bearing the greatest load and the arts, communication, and philosophy divison having the smallest load. The composite adjusted time taken by the college to respond to an admission application was found to be seven weeks for 76 percent of applicants, or as high as 85-89 percent in some individual years. A sample student record card and notes on data compilation are appended. (MSE)

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GENERAL COLLEGE BACCALAUREATE APPLICATIONS, ADMISSIONS AND ADVISING: 1976-1980 A STATISTICAL STUDY

by Peter T. Kahn, J.D.

ABSTRACT

Do fewer students apply to General College's four year degree program? Is the Baccalaureate admissions process a time consuming, arduous task for an applicant with limited chances for success? How is the Baccalaureate application/admission/advising/graduation load distributed among the teaching divisions of the College? To assess these and other concerns related to General College's four year degree program, a study was undertaken over Winter and Spring Quarters, 1980, addressing various aspects of the Baccalaureate application/admission/advising/graduation process. This report presents the findings of that research. The data contained in this document, by facilitating increased accuracy of faculty perceptions of Baccalaureate Programs, will provide a foundation of fact to promote productive, well-informed decision-making regarding the need for, and shape of, prospective changes in the policy and structure of the four year degree program in General College.

HE 014322

Editorial Board: General College Research Group

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The author of this report owes an immeasurable debt to various people without whose generous efforts this undertaking could not have been completed. Not to acknowledge their contributions would be selfish oversight. I am deeply grateful to Judy Harris and Sandi Kelzenberg for their assistance in data gathering. Research Assistant George Henly and Assistant Professor Tom Brothen provided invaluable help and guidance in statistical analysis and editing. I am especially appreciative of the contructive, thoughful criticism and suggestions for improvement as well as support and encouragement I received during the project from Professor Evelyn U. Hansen and Associate Dean Tom Buckley. Sincerest thanks to these and other colleagues.

INTRODUCTION

Since its beginning, a primary focus of General College has been to "seek new ways to give effective attention to the educational needs of bypassed and non-traditional student populations."[1] Relative to this experimental mission of the College, its faculty believed that a portion of the General College student body should have a broader opportunity to continue studies beyond the Associate in Arts degree level. Knowing that General College students have unique educational needs around which suitable individualized four-year degree programs could be built, the faculty decided that educational alternatives not available through conventional, four-year degree paths should be provided. Accordingly, General College launched its Extended Programs pilot project in 1970 to fill this educational gap.[2] The Extended Programs experiment gradually evolved into the present day General College Baccalaureate Program offering both Bachelor of General Studies and Bachelor of Applied Studies degrees.

Since its inception in 1970, the General College four-year degree program has undergone a series of philosophical and organizational changes. Various growing pains and problems developed and were reviewed. Suggestions for structural, procedural and policy change were proposed and evaluated. These events culminated in the issuance of a "policy statement" defining goals, philosophy and structure of individualized four-year degree programs, the General College Baccalaureate Guidelines, adopted and implemented by the General College faculty during the 1976 academic year. In conjunction with this major reorganization, a different approach to the operational dynamics of Baccalaureate Programs - admissions, advising, graduation - was adopted a year later.

The re-designed plan for administering Baccalaureate Programs was intended to alleviate and correct problems inherent in earlier operational methods, e.g., the need to make available information and planning help for potential candidates; the need for expeditious review and processing of program applications; the need to improve the quality of individual programs; and the need to involve a broad cross-section of the faculty in baccalaureate programs.[3]

From the time General College began to offer four-year degree opportunities, the College faculty expressed a broad range of concerns over the program: Are Baccalaureate Programs within the "mission" of General College? Do faculty receive sufficient support and reward for involvement in the program? Are operating guidelines which define program design and admissions requirements too restrictive or too loose?[4] A comprehensive inquiry was undertaken by Professor Evelyn U. Hansen during the 1978-79 academic year to

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[1]Moen, General College Studies, Vol. XV, #1.

[2]Ibid.

[3]Moen, et al., General College Baccalaureate Program Orientation - Advising - Administrative Structures, May 18, 1977.

[4]Hansen, General College Studies, Vol. XV, #3.

address these and other related issues. In researching, analyzing and reporting on seven years of Baccalaureate operations data, Professor Hansen focused upon "student and faculty attitudes toward Baccalaureate degrees, characteristics of four-year degree candidates, the value of degrees for employment, promotion and admission to graduate or professional study, the impact of individualized programs upon faculty advisors, and other matters."[5]

PURPOSE OF STUDY

Professor Hansen's study provided stimulus for further inquiry into the accuracy of faculty perceptions of, and attitudes toward, Baccalaureate Programs: How time consuming is the process of reviewing and acting upon Baccalaureate applications; Does General College lose a large number of students as fewer apply to Baccalaureate programs; How efficient and organized is the Baccalaureate admissions procedure; How is the Baccalaureate Programs application/admission service load distributed among divisions and participating College faculty? To assess these and other concerns related to Baccalaureate Programs operations, research was undertaken during Winter and Spring Quarters, 1980, focusing upon the nature and scope of various aspects of Baccalaureate Programs. Data were collected for the years 1976-77, the first year of program operations under the "1976 Guidelines," through the end of Spring Quarter, 1980, addressing three major areas: total number of Baccalaureate students (admittances/non-admittances/graduates) processed; time taken to review and process Baccalaureate applications; and Baccalaureate Advising Service Load. The results of that study are reported in the following pages.

Before discussing the structure and results of the study, an introductory caution should be emphasized. The make-up and focus of the study are limited. Care must be taken, therefore, not to carry interpretation of the data far beyond the original focus and purpose of the research. Minor errors might have occurred in retrieving, tracking and tabulating the data. The comprehensiveness, accuracy and availability of the records from which the information was drawn were, at times, slightly deficient. However, the results serve to indicate areas of strength and weakness within the General College four-year degree program. The data compiled constitute a reliable working base from which informed decisions concerning investment of resources, time, and effort can be effectively made, thereby increasing program efficiency and facilitating the implimentation of constructive program change. Through the study, areas of needed improvement become evident along with areas of effective functioning that require little or no change. The study results provide a clearer, more factually accurate picture of Baccalaureate Programs than the College has had to date. The data will help to prevent ill-informed or couterproductive changes from occurring.

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[5] General College Studies, Vol. XV, #s 1-4, 1978-79.

METHOD

A. Data Collection

The exclusive information source utilized for this study was Baccalaureate Programs oeprational records maintained by the Baccalaureate clerical staff since the inception of Extended Programs in 1970. From these records, three data bases were used to retrieve the reported findings: Baccalaureate Programs Information File Cards; Baccalaureate Programs Committee Action Lists; and Baccalaureate Programs Graduation Lists. These data bases comprise the foundation of the Baccalaureate Programs record system. No previous tabulation or statistical analysis had been conducted using the same data for similar purposes.

B. Explanation of Data Bases

The Baccalaureate Information Card File is the primary data base of the Baccalaureate record keeping system. Dating from 1971, the File consists of individual cards containing information on each applicant to Baccalaureate Programs. (See Appendix A for a sample File Card.) Over a decade of operations, with administrative, policy, procedural and personnel changes, the nature and completeness of the data reported in the cards has varied. For the purposes of the immediate research, the information drawn from the cards included:

1. Date an admissions application was received by the Baccalaureate Programs Office
2. Divisional admissions review committee to which an application was referred for review (for applications received after Summer Session, 1977)
3. Date a letter of acceptance or rejection was sent to an applicant by the Baccalaureate Office
4. Date of graduation
5. Title of an applicant's program
6. Name of assigned advisor of an applicant.

The second data source used in the study was the Baccalaureate Committee Action List. Dating back to Winter Quarter, 1975, this chronological log notes the date official action (admit, admit with contingencies, hold for clarification, or non-admit) was taken by admission committees (either all College for pre-Fall, 1977 applications, or divisional for Fall, 1977, and thereafter) for each application submitted. The list also contains, in most cases, advisor assignments for program admittees.

The third information source employed to compile the reported data was the Baccalaureate Graduation List. A chronological record dating back to Spring Quarter, 1972, the Graduation List notes when a student graduated from Baccalaureate Programs, as well as official advisor assignment.

C. Data Compilation Procedure

For the reader's convenience, a detailed discussion of how the reported data were compiled is included in a separate section, Appendix B. The bal-

ance of this report discusses the study findings.

SURVEY RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

A. Baccalaureate Applications Data

1. Explanation of Data Presentation Format

Table One and Figures One through Seven focus on total applications submitted to General College Baccalaureate Programs from July 1, 1976, through June 30, 1980. The figure "total applications" was arrived at by combining "admits" with "non-admits" (or "holds," in those unusual cases where a formal admissions decision was not made due to technical, procedural or similar problems). Total applications was computed on an all-College basis for each year of the study. The yearly College totals were broken down on an admit/non-admit basis and translated into yearly percentage rates. A composite all-College picture, covering the study-years span, was presented for the same statistical categories.

College applications data were also analyzed from a divisional perspective covering the same statistical categories. For each General College teaching division which formally reviewed and admitted Baccalaureate applications (Social and Behavioral Sciences - S.B.S.; Arts, Communication & Philosophy - A.C.P.; and Science, Business & Math - S.B.M.), total applications received within a division was noted. These divisions were the focus of the report since they handle the bulk (approximately 95%) of the College Baccalaureate applications/admission/advising load. Only a bare handful of applications are processed or housed elsewhere. Yearly divisional totals were translated into admits/non-admits and corresponding percentage rates. The divisional share of the College yearly Baccalaureate application load (admission, non-admission and total) was also calculated. Finally, a composite four-year divisional picture was reported covering the same statistical categories.

2. Discussion of All-College Data

a. Annual Total Applications Processed

How many students apply to Baccalaureate Programs in any given year? Over a period of time, how does this figure change? Do fewer students seek admission now than once did?

Table One and Figure One reveal that over the years of the study, 32% fewer students sought admission to Baccalaureate Programs during the last year of the study than in the first year. Total yearly applications dropped to 203 for 1979-80 from a peak of 298 in 1976-77. From that first year peak, yearly applications decreased 46% to 161 in 1978-79. Over the last year of the study, a 26% increase in yearly applications occurred, closing at 203 for the study.

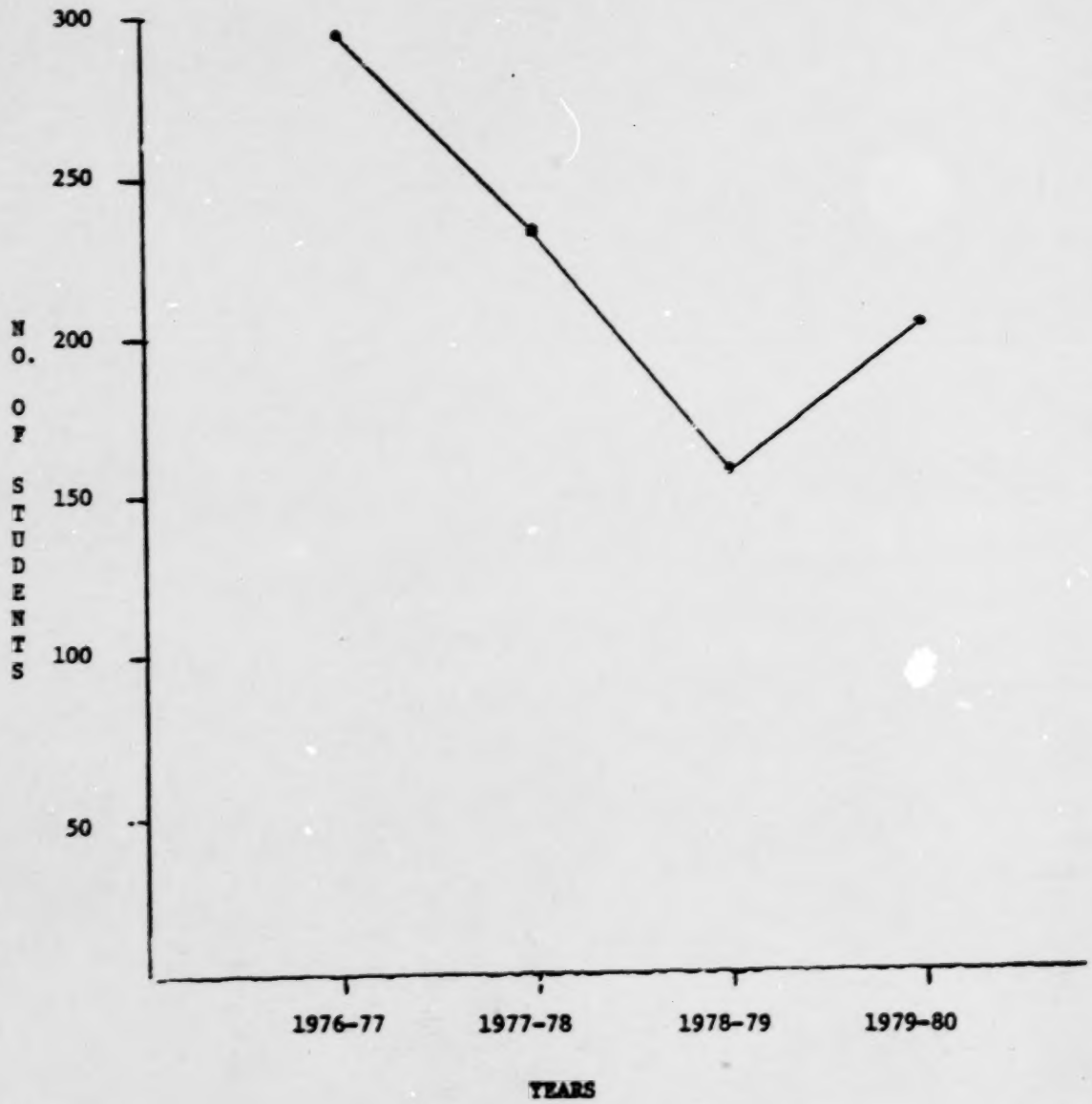
Table 1

BACCALAUREATE APPLICATIONS DATA 1976-1980

		Teaching Division:									All-College:	
Year		N	SBS Share	Rate	N	ACP Share	Rate	N	SBM Share	Rate	N	Rate
1976-77	Admits:	69	35%	72%	33	17%	53%	96	48%	69%	198	66%
	Non-Admits:	27	27%		29	29%		44	44%		100	
	Total:	92	32%		62	21%		140	47%		298	
1977-78	Admits:	70	42%	80%	47	28%	77%	51	30%	63%	168	73%
	Non-Admits:	17	28%		14	23%		30	48%		61	
	Total	87	38%		61	27%		81	35%		229	
1978-79	Admits:	57	37%	97%	31	21%	100%	63	42%	89%	151	94%
	Non-Admits:	2	20%		0	0%		8	80%		10	
	Total:	59	37%		31	19%		71	44%		161	
1979-80	Admits:	55	32%	90%	32	18%	82%	88	50%	85%	175	86%
	Non-Admits:	6	22%		7	25%		15	53%		28	
	Total:	61	30%		39	19%		103	51%		203	
TOTAL:	Admits:	251	36%	82%	143	21%	74%	298	43%	75%	692	78%
	Non-Admits:	52	26%		50	25%		97	49%		199	
	Total:	303	34%		193	22%		395	44%		891	

Figure 1

BACCALAUREATE APPLICATIONS
PROCESSED BY GENERAL COLLEGE
1976-1980



Possible explanations for the overall 32% decline in students seeking four-year degrees from General College from 1976-77 through 1979-80 are many and varied. Some people contend that the emergence and growth of competing, non-traditional individually designed four-year degree programs, from both within the University and from without, provide educational alternatives which were once unavailable to students seeking entry to General College Baccalaureate Programs and, therefore, necessarily deplete the Baccalaureate applicant pool. Others maintain that the decline in four-year degree applications is attributable to the substantive and procedural program changes implimented in Baccalaureate Programs during 1976-77. It is theorized that students, fearing the new admissions policies and practices too cumbersome and threatening, seek four-year degrees through more "accommodating" programs elsewhere. Related to the changes brought about by the adoption of the "1976 Guidelines" is the possible explanation that as the quality of applications improved, the casual or more marginal student was discouraged from applying. Still another reason offered for the applications decline is the increased cost of education coupled with the general economic downturn. For the financially marginal student, college has been priced out as a realistic choice.

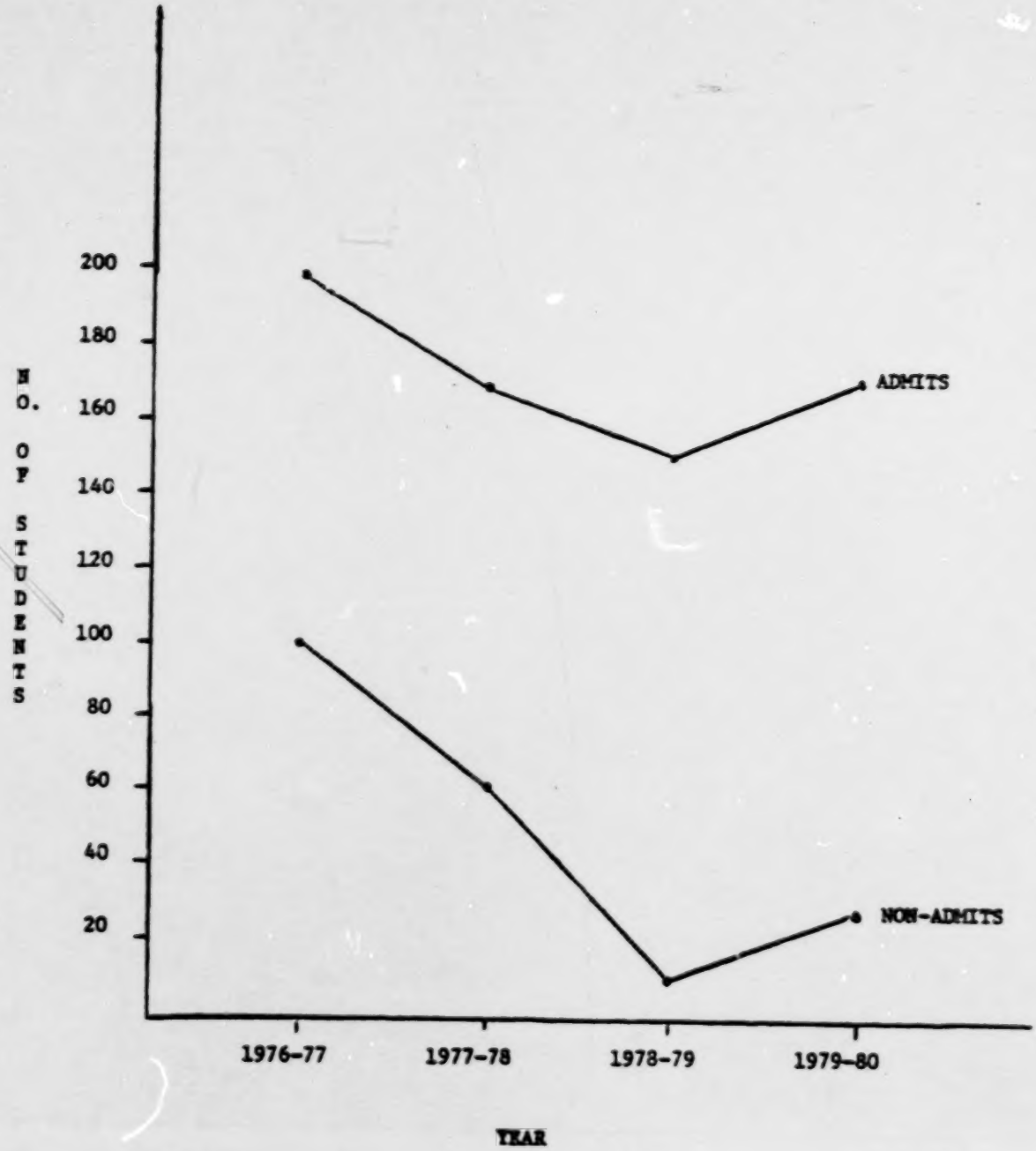
b. Annual Admissions/Non-admissions

How many students succeed in their effort to gain admission to Baccalaureate Programs? What is the admissions success ratio of applicants? How do the number and percentage of admissions change over time? Are fewer students, either in number or percentage, admitted to General College's four-year degree program now than once were?

Data contained in Table One also shows trends in annual College program admits and non-admits. Since program admissions plus non-admissions generally equals total applicatons processed, patterns of change in the latter should be reflected in the former. Figure Two reveals this fact. From respective peak positions during the first year of study (admits 198 and non-admits 100), these statistics declined through the end of the study, admits by 12% and non-admits by 72%. The sharpest period of admission decrease for the College occurred through 1978-79, admits dropping 23% to a low of 151. At the same time, non-admits were bottoming-out, down 90% to a survey low of 10. Thereafter, over the last year of the study, program admits increased 16% to 175 and non-admits 180% to 28. Thus, although fewer students were being admitted to Baccalaureate Programs at the close of the study (a 12% reduction), an even greater reduction (72%) had occurred in the number of applicants who were not successful in their effort to gain admission. The markedly steeper rate of decline in program non-admits over program admits meant that, proportionately, more students were being admitted to pursue four-year degree plans in the College over the span of the study, although in terms of actual numbers, admissions had declined. The College admission rate (See Figure 5) for the years studied corroborates this conclusion. At the same time that total applications submitted for review was down 32%, the ratio of success for each applicant (all-College admission rate) had increased 30%. Rising from a low of 66% in 1976-77, the College yearly admission rate rose 42% to a survey peak of 94% in 1978-79, followed by an 8% decline to 86% over the last year of the

Figure 2

ANNUAL BACCALAUREATE ADMISSIONS AND
NON-ADMISSIONS FOR GENERAL COLLEGE
1976-1980



study. Spanning the whole study, the composite College admission rate was 78%.

Changes in the number and rate of admission/non-admissions reveal a distinct pattern: changes in non-admissions follow changes in admissions. As the number and rate of admissions declines, so does non-admissions. The reverse also holds true. This fact would seem to indicate an informal program overload control mechanism in operation. Nevertheless, the reported data clearly prove a dramatic increase in the proportion of applicants who gain admission to Baccalaureate Programs. This fact clearly demonstrates the benefit students are deriving from G.C. 1-894, Planning a Baccalaureate Program. This one credit, S-N graded course offers structured assistance to students in preparing a formal application to the College Baccalaureate Program. Students are helped with choosing program themes, relating appropriate coursework and writing supporting explanatory documents.

3. Discussion of Divisional Data

a. Total Annual Applications Processed

How many applications do the respective admitting divisions process annually? Do some divisions handle more applications than others? To what extent? How do these statistics change over time?

Further understanding of trends and patterns of change in Baccalaureate Programs can be gained by reviewing applications data from a divisional perspective. Reported in Table One and Figure Three, the statistics show that total yearly applications dropped for each division from study year peaks in 1976-77 to a low point in 1978-79, with a moderate rise thereafter over the last year of the study.

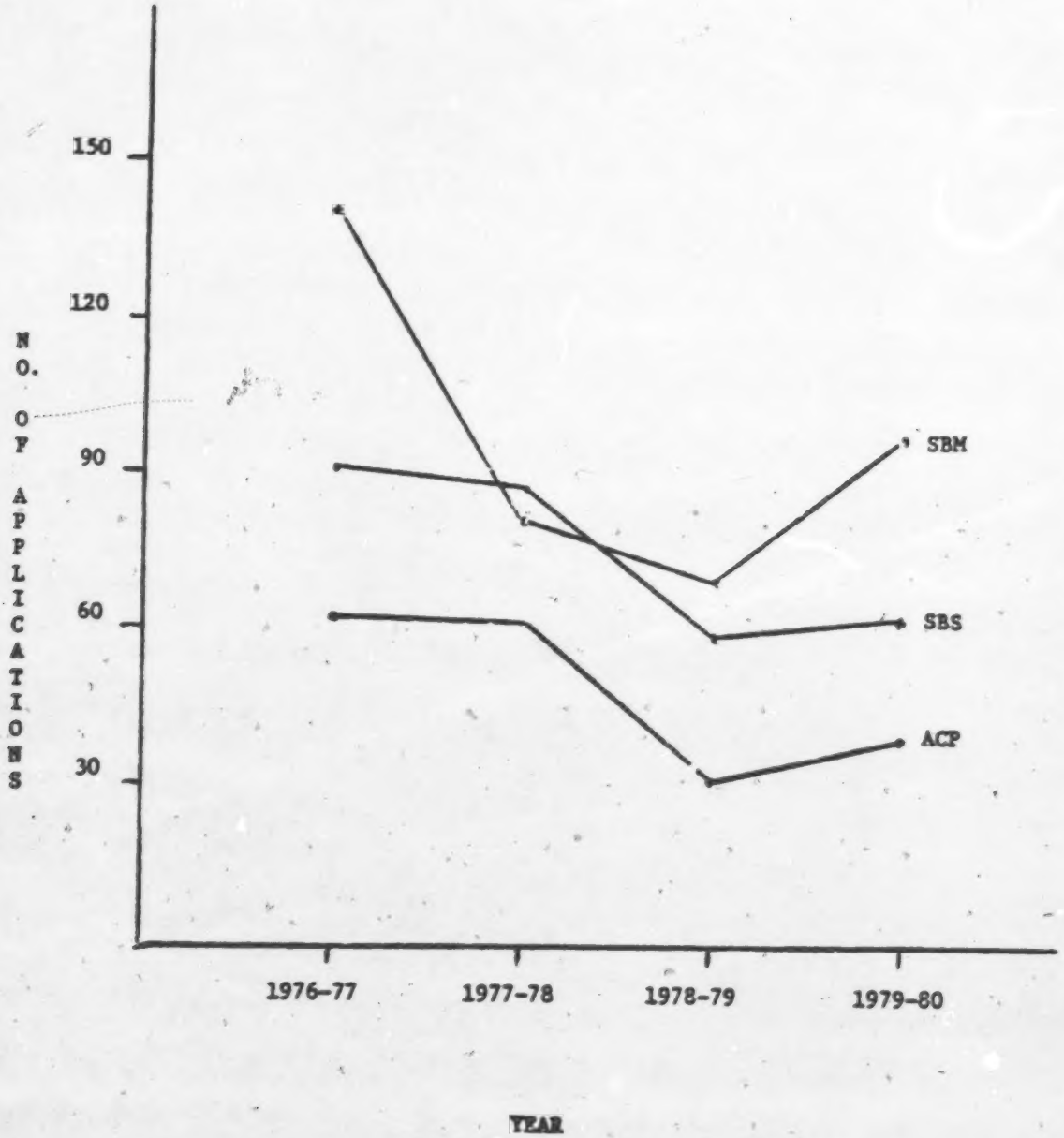
A.C.P. and S.B.S. experienced nearly identical patterns of change in this area. For the whole study, these two divisions had approximately the same overall rate of decline in total yearly applications (A.C.P. down 34% and S.B.S. down 37%). From peak positions (A.C.P. 62, S.B.S. 92) in 1976-77, both divisions received steadily fewer applications through 1978-79, A.C.P. declining 50% to 31 and S.B.S. dropping 36% to 59 applications. Thereafter, these divisions had a gradual increase in the number of applications processed over the last year of the study, A.C.P. rising 36% to 39 and S.B.S. increasing 3% to 61 applications.

The third program admitting division in the College, S.B.M., underwent significantly different and more dramatic changes in total annual applications processed. S.B.M. was handling 26% fewer applications at the close of the study than at its beginning. From a peak of 140 in 1976-77, S.B.M. had a marked 49% decline in total annual applications through 1978-79, reaching a survey low of 71. This pronounced drop in number of applications abruptly reversed during 1979-80, as S.B.M. experienced a 45% increase (to 103) in applications received.

Concluding the discussion of total yearly applications processed by each division, Table One and Figure Three show that, during each of the years for which data were gathered, A.C.P. processed the fewest number of

FIGURE 3

TOTAL BACCALAUREATE APPLICATIONS
PROCESSED BY TEACHING DIVISION
1976-1980



applications while S.B.M., for three of the four years, processed the greatest number.

b. Annual Admissions/Non-admissions

How many applicants to Baccalaureate programs are admitted by each division? Do the divisions admit the same amount? How might the answers to these questions be different from a non-admissions perspective? What patterns of change in these areas occur over a period of time?

Another approach to analyzing the data reported in Table One is presented in Figure Four which depicts divisional applications data from a yearly admissions/non-admissions perspective. For the span of the study, S.B.S. was admitting 20% fewer students at study's close than at the beginning, A.C.P. had an overall 3% decline in admissions and S.B.M. had an overall 8% drop in its number of program admittees.

From 1977-78 through 1979-80, A.C.P. and S.B.S. followed similar patterns of admission change. Both divisions dropped from admission peaks in 1977-78 to fairly stable admission positions over the last two years of the study (A.C.P. declined 34% from 47 to 31 and 32, S.B.S. dropped 20% to 57 and 55 from a peak of 70). Prior to their common peak year, A.C.P. and S.B.S. experienced dissimilar patterns of change. From 1976-77 to 1977-78, A.C.P. was the only division to undergo an admissions increase, rising 42% from 33 to 47 admittees. Except for this year, however, A.C.P. had an essentially stable admissions picture for the study years - in the low 30's.

S.B.S. admissions data for the same period, 1976-77 through 1977-78, is markedly different. S.B.S. experienced almost no change for these study years with admission positions of 69 and 70. This pattern of admissions stability in S.B.S. was repeated over the last two years of the study with admissions at 57 and 55, respectively.

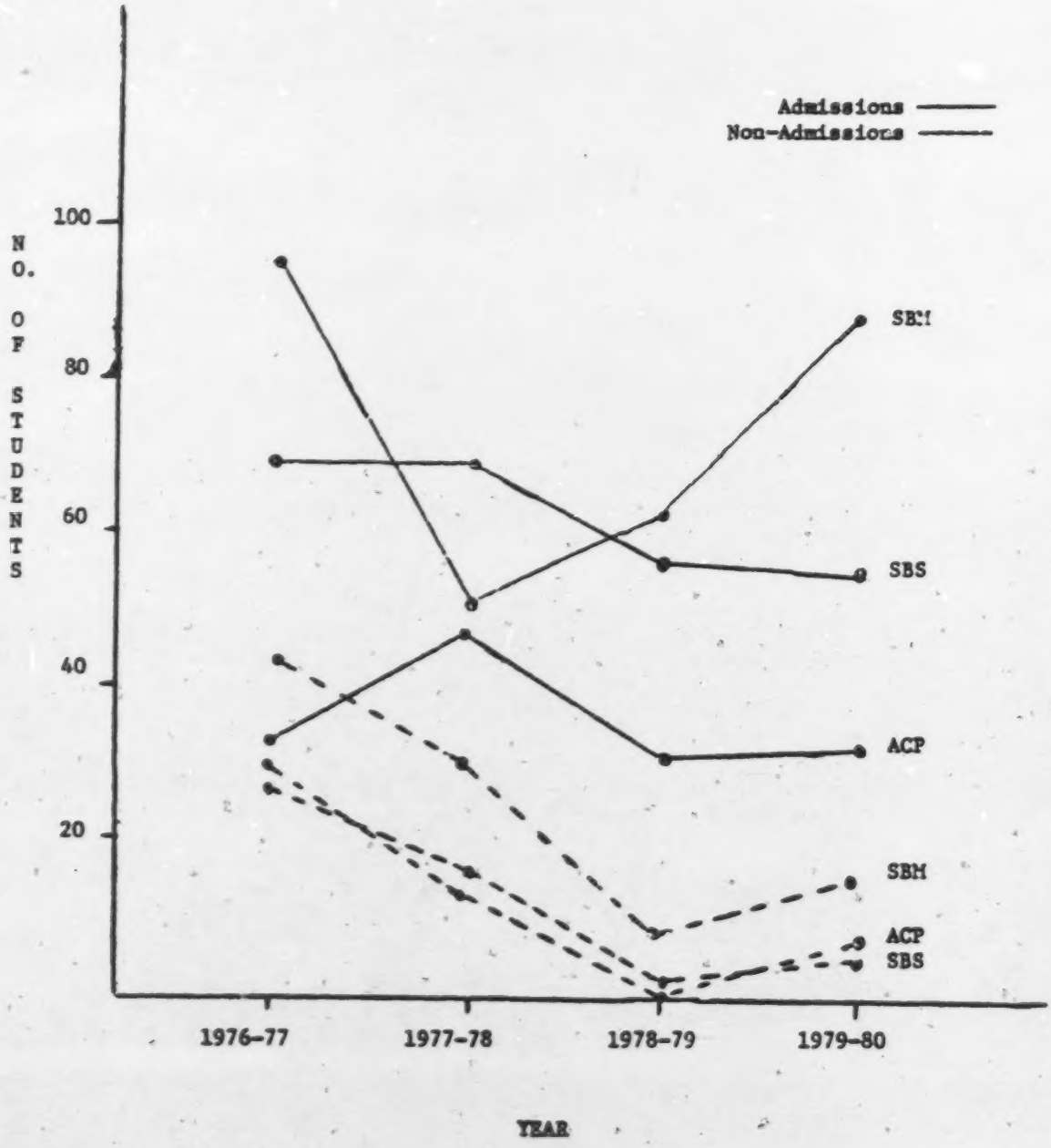
Admissions data for S.B.M. show an entirely different pattern. As with A.C.P., the years 1976 through 1978 were ones of significant change. Contrary to A.C.P.'s sharp increase in number of admissions over this period, S.B.M. experienced a 47% admissions decline from a peak of 96 in 1976-77 to a low of 51 one year later. Following this percipitous decrease, S.B.M. had a complete about-face, admissions rising 72% during the last two years of the study, closing at a near first year peak level of 88.

The divisional admissions data contained in Table One and Figure Four reveal a curious pattern. During years that S.B.S. and A.C.P. experienced either admissions increases or stability, S.B.M. admissions dropped sharply. On the other hand, while A.C.P. and S.B.S. incurred admissions declines or stability, S.B.M. underwent a decided upswing in admissions. What forces of substantive and procedural adjustment at play to explain these disharmonious results is left to conjecture.

Concluding the analysis of yearly divisional admissions data, S.B.M. had the most program admittees for all the study years except 1977-78. On the other hand, A.C.P. had the fewest number of admits for each of the years studied.

Figure 4

ANNUAL BACCALAUREATE ADMISSIONS AND
NON-ADMISSIONS BY TEACHING DIVISION
1976-1980



The lack of convergence among the divisions in yearly admissions data does not hold true for non-admissions. Figure Four shows that A.C.P., S.B.S. and S.B.M. generally shared the same non-admittance pattern. For the span of the study, the respective divisions were rejecting significantly fewer applicants at the close of the study than at its beginning, A.C.P. having an overall 76% decline in its non-admits, S.B.S. a 78% decrease and S.B.M. a drop of 66%. From non-admission peaks in 1976-77 (A.C.P. 29, S.B.S. 27 and S.B.M. 44), rejections bottomed-out for each division in 1978-79, after three years of steady decline (A.C.P. down 100% to 0, S.B.S. down 92% to 2 and S.B.M. down 82% to 8). Over the last year of the study, however, this three year downturn in program non-admissions reversed itself. A.C.P. rejections were up to 7, S.B.S. experienced a non-admissions increase to 6, and S.B.M. had a rise in non-admissions to 15.

For each year studied, S.B.M. had the highest number of program rejections. At the same time, however, it had the highest number of admits for three of the four years studied. During the middle two years of the study, A.C.P. had the fewest rejections while also having the least number of program admits for each of the study years. During the first and final study years, S.B.S. was rejecting the fewest number of program applicants.

c. Annual Admission Rate

What are the rates of admission for each division? How similar are they? Is it more difficult (or easy) to be admitted by one division than another? How does annual divisional admission rate change from year to year?

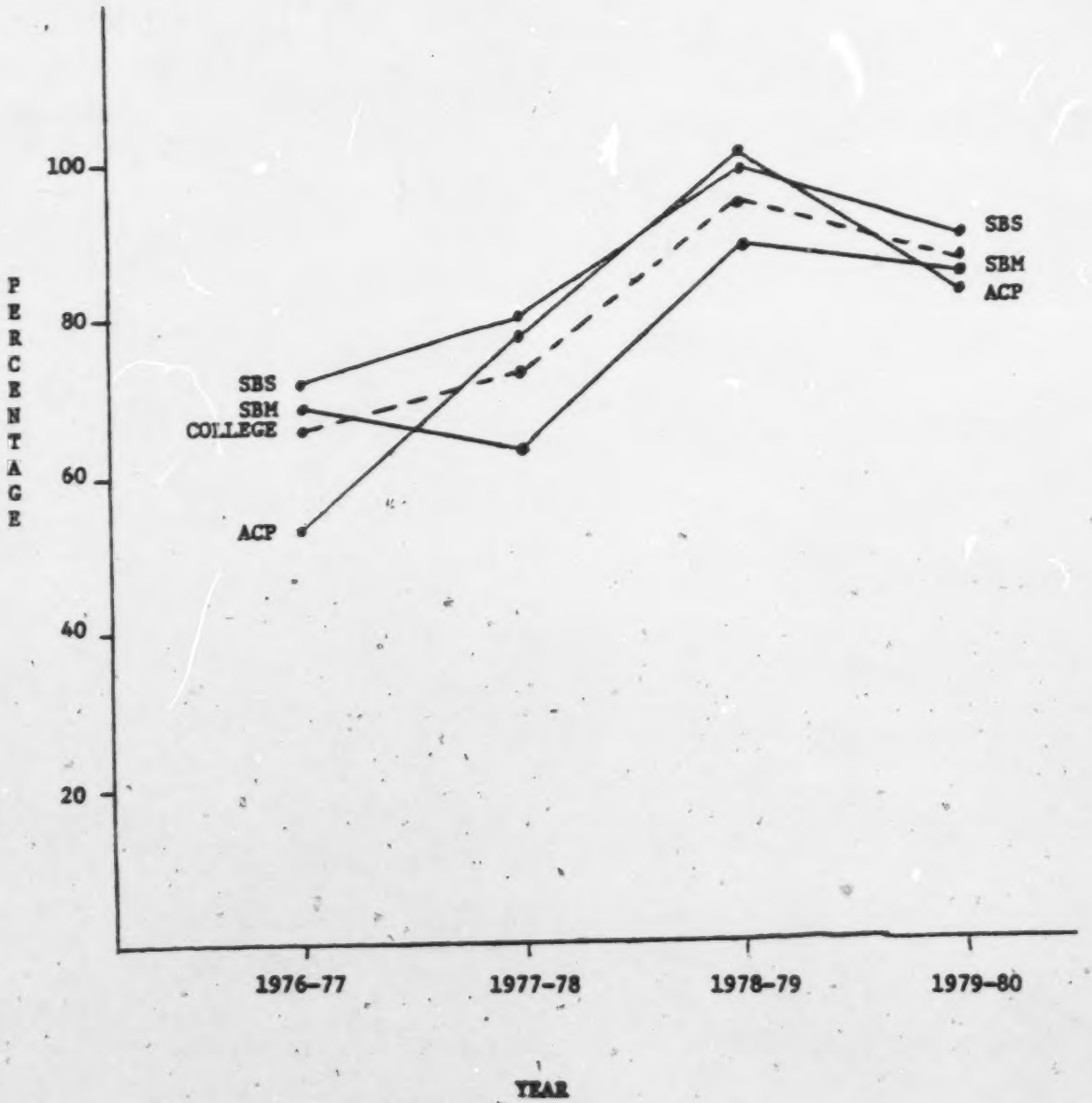
Yearly divisional applications data reported in this study can also be understood on the basis of patterns in rates of admission. Table One and Figure Five demonstrate that the divisions shared fairly similar patterns of admission rate change.

From 1977-78 through the end of the study, S.B.M. and S.B.S. had almost identical admission rate patterns of change. Starting with an admission rate of 72% in 1976-77, S.B.S. had a steady (35%) increase to a peak admission rate of 97% in 1978-79. Thereafter, the admission rate for S.B.S. declined slightly (7%) to 90% by the end of the study. S.B.M. had a different admission rate change over the first year of the study, experiencing a drop of 9% from 69% to 63%. From this 1977-78 low point, the admission rate for S.B.M. jumped 41% to a peak of 89% in 1978-79, followed by a slight (4%) decline to 85% for the last year of the study. For the span of the study, S.B.S. had an overall admissions rate increase of 25% and the highest composite admissions rate (82%) of the three divisions. The composite rate for S.B.M. was 75% with the division experiencing an overall admission rate increase of 23% for the study.

The pattern of admission rate change experienced by A.C.P. was more dramatic than the other two divisions. From an admission rate of 53% in 1976-77, A.C.P. had the highest increase across the divisions (89%) through its peak of 100% in 1978-79. Thereafter, A.C.P.'s admission rate dropped 18% to close at 82% for the study. Covering the study, A.C.P. had the low-

Figure 5

ANNUAL DIVISIONAL AND COLLEGE BACCALAUREATE APPLICATION
ADMISSION RATE
1976-1980



est composite admission rate (74%) while at the same time experiencing the highest overall admission rate increase, 55%.

For the middle years of the study, 1977-79, S.B.M. had the lowest yearly admission rate (63% and 89%). During the first and last years of the study, A.C.P. had the lowest rate of admissions at 53% and 82%. Except for 1978-79, S.B.S. had the highest admission rate, ranging from 72% to 97%.

Comparing yearly divisional admit rates to College rates reveals an interesting picture. S.B.S. was the only division to maintain an admit rate higher than the College rate for each of the study years, ranging from a 3% point to a 7% point difference. The overall admit rate of S.B.S., at 82%, was 4% points higher than the all-College composite admission rate. The yearly admission rate of A.C.P., on the other hand, when contrasted to the College rate, displayed an unstable pattern. For two years (1976-77 at a 13% point difference and in 1979-80, at a 4% point difference) the A.C.P. rate was below the all-College rate. During the other study years, the A.C.P. rate exceeded the College rate by a 4% to 6% point difference. Overall, the A.C.P. composite admission rate of 74% was 4% points below the all-College rate. Except for one year, 1976-77, when its admission rate was 3% points above the College figure, S.B.M. had yearly admission rates from 1 to 10% points below the college level. At 75%, the composite S.B.M. admission rate was 3% points lower than the College level.

d. Distribution of Yearly College Applications Load

What portion of the total applications load is borne by each division? Do the divisions share equally in this regard? What changes in divisional share of the all-College applications load occur over time? How is the College admissions/non-admissions load distributed among the divisions? Do the divisions share equally in this area? What changes over time take place in this area?

Final analysis of the applications data reported in Table One focuses upon the percentages of the College Baccalaureate load (total applications, admissions and non-admissions) shared by the admitting divisions. Figure Six presents proportionate divisional sharing of the annual College applications load. Figure Seven depicts divisional sharing of the yearly College admissions load. The data reveal an interesting picture.

S.B.S. and A.C.P. had generally similar patterns in sharing yearly College applications load. Both divisions experienced slight increases in their shares of the total applications load during the first year of the study followed by a decline over the last three years of the study. S.B.M. underwent exactly opposite changes. After a decline in its share of the College applications load during the first study year, S.B.M.'s share increased for the balance of the study years.

For the whole study, A.C.P. had an overall 9% reduced share of the College yearly applications load, dropping from a 21% share in 1976-77 to a 19% share by study's end. S.B.S. experienced a similar overall decline in its share of the College applications load, decreasing 6% (from 32% to

Figure 6

SHARE OF ANNUAL COLLEGE BACCALAUREATE APPLICATION
LOAD BY TEACHING DIVISION
1976-1980

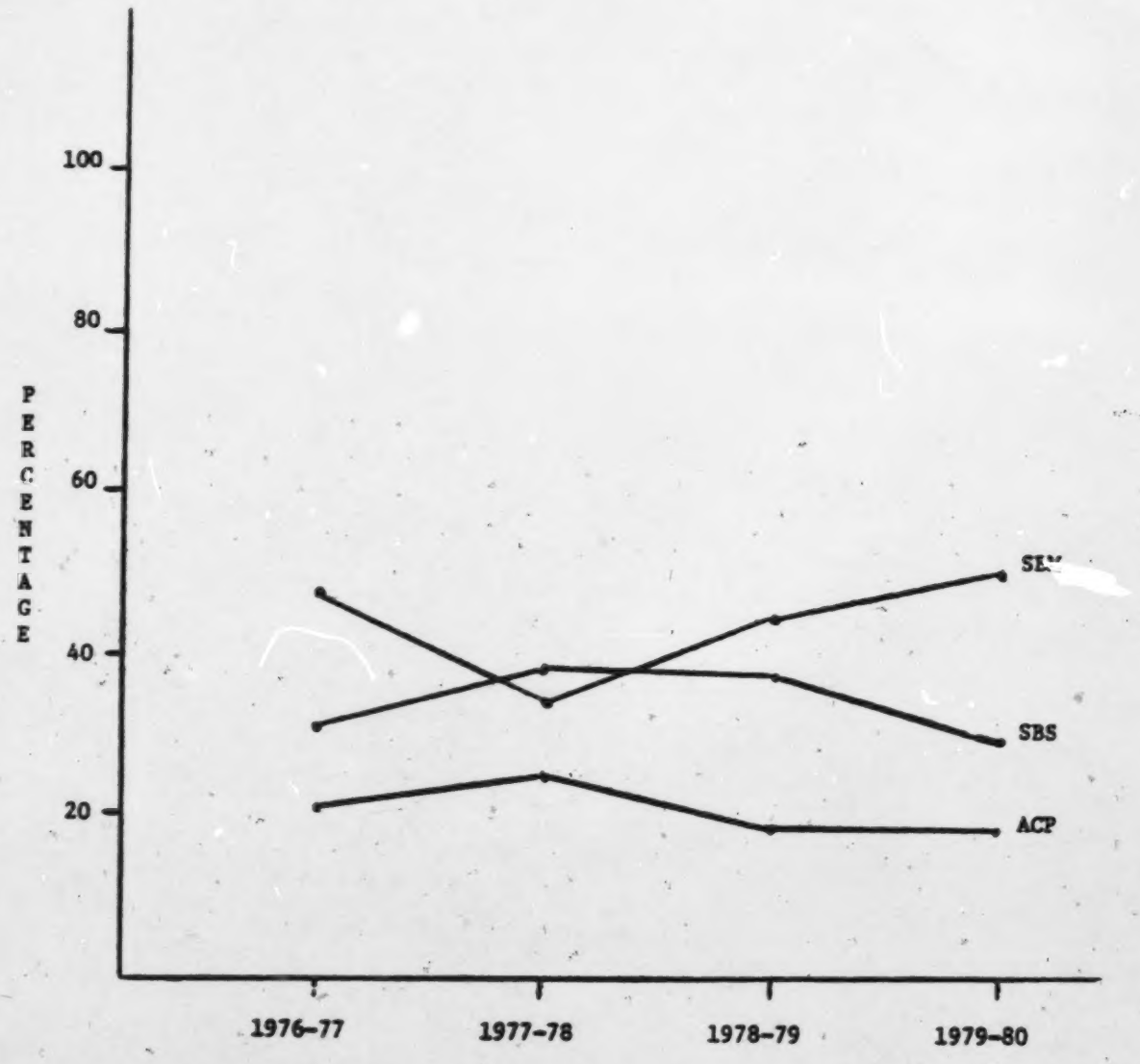
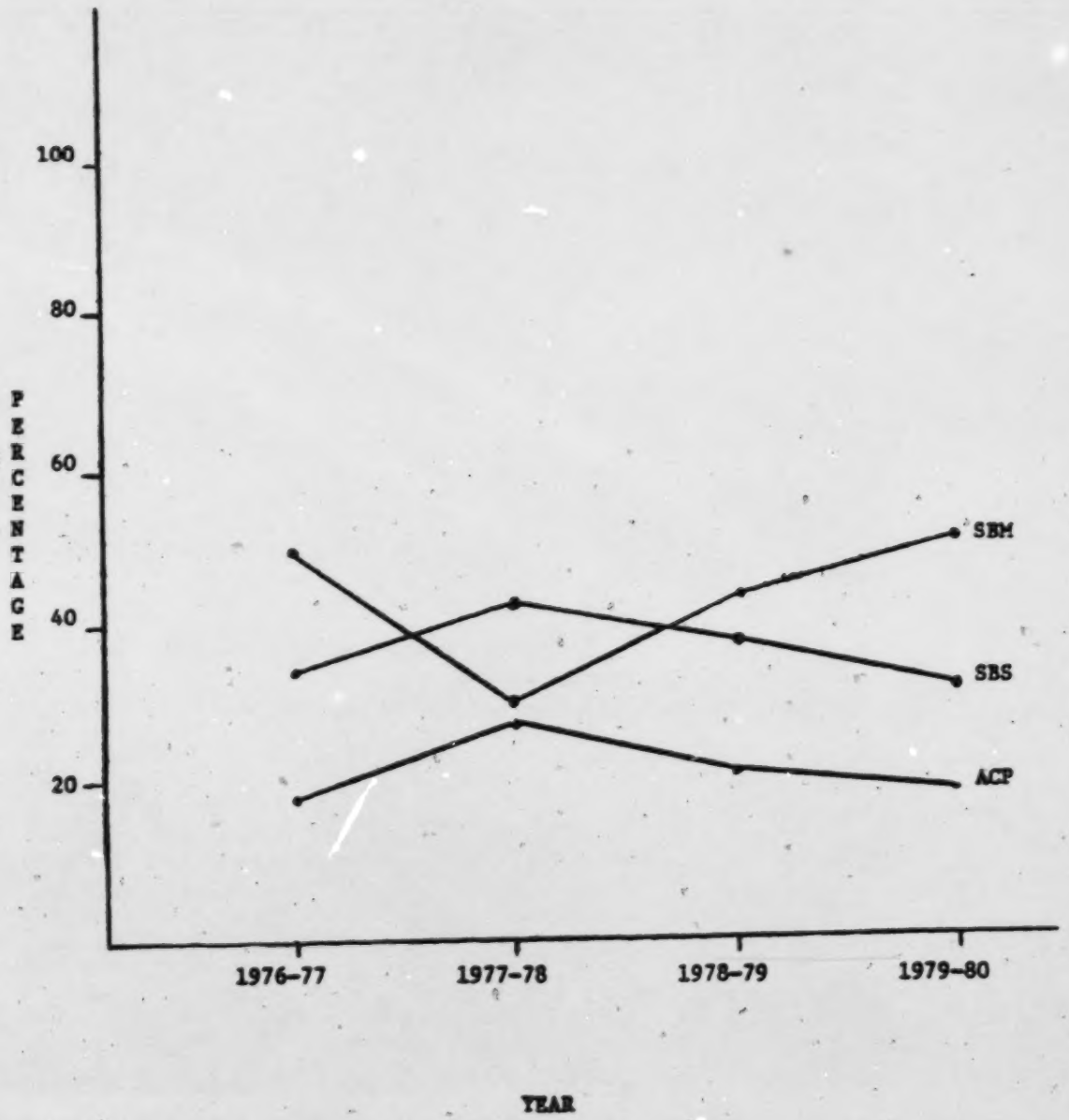


Figure 7

SHARE OF COLLEGE BACCALAUREATE ADMISSION
LOAD BY TEACHING DIVISION
1976-1980



30%) by the final year of the study. S.B.M., in contrast, had an overall 8% greater share of the yearly College applications load at the close of the study than at its beginnings, rising to a 51% share in 1979-80, from a 47% share in 1976-77.

A.C.P. and S.B.S., sharing nearly parallel changes in their portions of the yearly College applications load, had increases from 1976-77 through peak years in 1977-78, A.C.P. having an increase of 28% (from 21% to 27%) and S.B.S. undergoing an increase of 19% (from 32% to 38%). Thereafter, the shares of the applications load of these divisions dropped, A.C.P. declining 30% to a 19% share by study's end and S.B.S. dropping 21% to a final year 30% applications share. Both these closing divisional shares were at levels lower than when the study commenced. The composite application load shares for A.C.P. and S.B.S. were 22% and 34% respectively.

The pattern in total applications load borne by S.B.M. was completely different. During the first year of the study, S.B.M. ahd a 25% drop in its share of the annual applications load, down from 47% in 1976-77, to 35% for 1977-78. From that time, however, through study's close, S.B.M.'s share of the College applications load steadily increased, rising 46% to a share of 51% for 1979-80, an 8% greater share than during the first year of the study. The composite applications load share for S.B.M., at 44%, meant that a single division was processing almost half of the applications submitted to Baccalaureate Programs.

Divisional sharing of the yearly College admissions load, presented in Figure Seven, is nearly identical to the pattern of development for divisional sharing of the annual applications load. Study year 1977-78 was, again, a year of significant change. By the close of the study, S.B.M. had undergone an overall 4% increase in its share of the admission load (up from 48% during the first year of the study to 50% during the final year). A.C.P.'s share of the admission load rose an overall 6% over the years studied (from 17% to 18%) while S.B.S.'s admission share dropped by 8% during the years studied (from 35% in 1976-77 to 32% by 1979-80).

The composite annual admission load shares for the divisions were nearly identical to annual application load shares. S.B.S. had a composite admission share of 36% (2% points above its applications share), A.C.P.'s composite share of 21% was 1% point below its applications share as was S.B.M.'s composite admission load share of 43%. Thus, S.B.S. admitted slightly more students per application load share than did A.C.P. or S.B.M., which admitted slightly fewer.

S.B.S. and A.C.P., as with application load share, had nearly identical patterns of change in admission load share. Both had admission load share peaks in 1977-78. A.C.P. had an increase of 65% to a 28% admissions share (up from 17% the previous year) and S.B.S. had an increase of 20% (from 35% to 42%) over the same time. Thereafter, both divisions experienced admission share declines, A.C.P. dropping 36% to a share of 18% by study's end and S.B.S. decreasing 12% to a 37% share for 1979-80. Both these closing yearly divisional admission shares were below the shares of these divisions at the start of the study.

The admission load share changes experienced by S.B.M. were exactly contrary to those undergone by S.B.S. and A.C.P. Over the first year of the study, S.B.M.'s share of the admission load dropped 37% (from 48% in 1976-77 to a low of 30% in 1977-78). From that point, S.B.M.'s admission load share steadily increased, rising 67% over the last years of the study to a 50% share by study's end, a level slightly above its starting position.

Comparing annual application load share with annual admission load share among the divisions leads to interesting conclusions. For three of the four study years, S.B.S. had an admissions load share from 2 to 4% points higher than its yearly total application load share, indicating that S.B.S. was admitting proportionately more students than its applications load share might dictate. For two of the study years, S.B.M. had an admissions load share ranging from 1 to 5% points below its appications load share, thus admitting during those years proportionately fewer students vis-a-vis its applications load share. S.B.M.'s admission load share for the other two years of the study was essentially the same as its application share. A.C.P. had two years during which its admissions load share was below its application share (ranging from 1 to 2% points) and two years in which these two statistical categories were basically the same.

B. Baccalaureate Admissions Review Response Time

1. Explanation of Data Presentation Format

Table Two and Figures Eight and Nine report the time (turn around, response time) taken to process Baccalaureate applications through the admissions process.

Starting with Summer Session I, 1977, and carrying through successive one-year periods ending with Spring Quarter, 1980, application process time was grouped into one of four weekly categories: one to three, three to five, five to seven, and over-seven weeks. Total applications processed (admits plus non-admits and holds) in a given year (represented by N) was noted. Raw response time for each application reviewed within a study year was calculated (See Data Compilation Procedure for Application Response Time in Appendix B) and reported in the appropriate weekly category as BASE TIME. Total BASE TIME entries for the respective categories were translated into percentages, indicating what proportions of applications fell into each category for each of the years studied.

Using the adjusting process explained in Data Compilation Procedure for Application Response Time contained in Appendix B, applications in the over-seven-week category were subject to reassignment. Reassigned entries were reported as ADJUSTED TIME for the yearly and weekly data categories. Expected delay adjustments for the over-seven-week grouping left remaining in that category only those applicants that had experienced real bureaucratic delay (lost folders, ignored folders, foot-dragging, etc.) in the admission process either at the admission-review or the advisor-assignment stages or both. Thus, for weekly categories one through three, BASE TIME entries were combined with additions and reported as ADJUSTED TIME. Subtractions were made from weekly category four and also reported as ADJUSTED TIME. These entries were, in turn, translated into percentages,

Table 2

BACCALAUREATE ADMISSIONS REVIEW RESPONSE TIME

BASE BACCALAUREATE APPLICATION PROCESSING TIME

Academic Year		1-3 Weeks	3-5 Weeks	5-7 Weeks	Over 7 Weeks	Total**
1977-1978	N:	35	44	33	97	209
	(%)	(17)	(21)	(16)	(46)	
1978-1979	N:	61	45	20	23	149
	(%)	(41)	(30)	(13)	(15)	
1979-1980	N:	62	58	18	54	192
	(%)	(32)	(30)	(9)	(28)	
Total	N:	158	147	71	174	550
	(%)	(29)	(27)	(13)	(32)	

ADJUSTED BACCALAUREATE APPLICATION PROCESSING TIME

Academic Year		1-3 Weeks	3-5 Weeks	5-7 Weeks	Over 7 Weeks	Total
1977-1978	N:	37	49	37	86	209
	(%)	(18)	(23)	(18)	(41)	
1978-1979	N:	64	45	24	16	149
	(%)	(43)	(30)	(16)	(11)	
1979-1980	N:	75	65	24	28	192
	(%)	(39)	(34)	(13)	(15)	
Total	N:	176	159	85	130	550
	(%)	(32)	(29)	(15)	(24)	

**Totals on Tables 1 and 2 will not agree because re-applications were not included in computation of Table 2 data; reapplications <u>are</u> counted in data reported in Table 1.

Figure 8

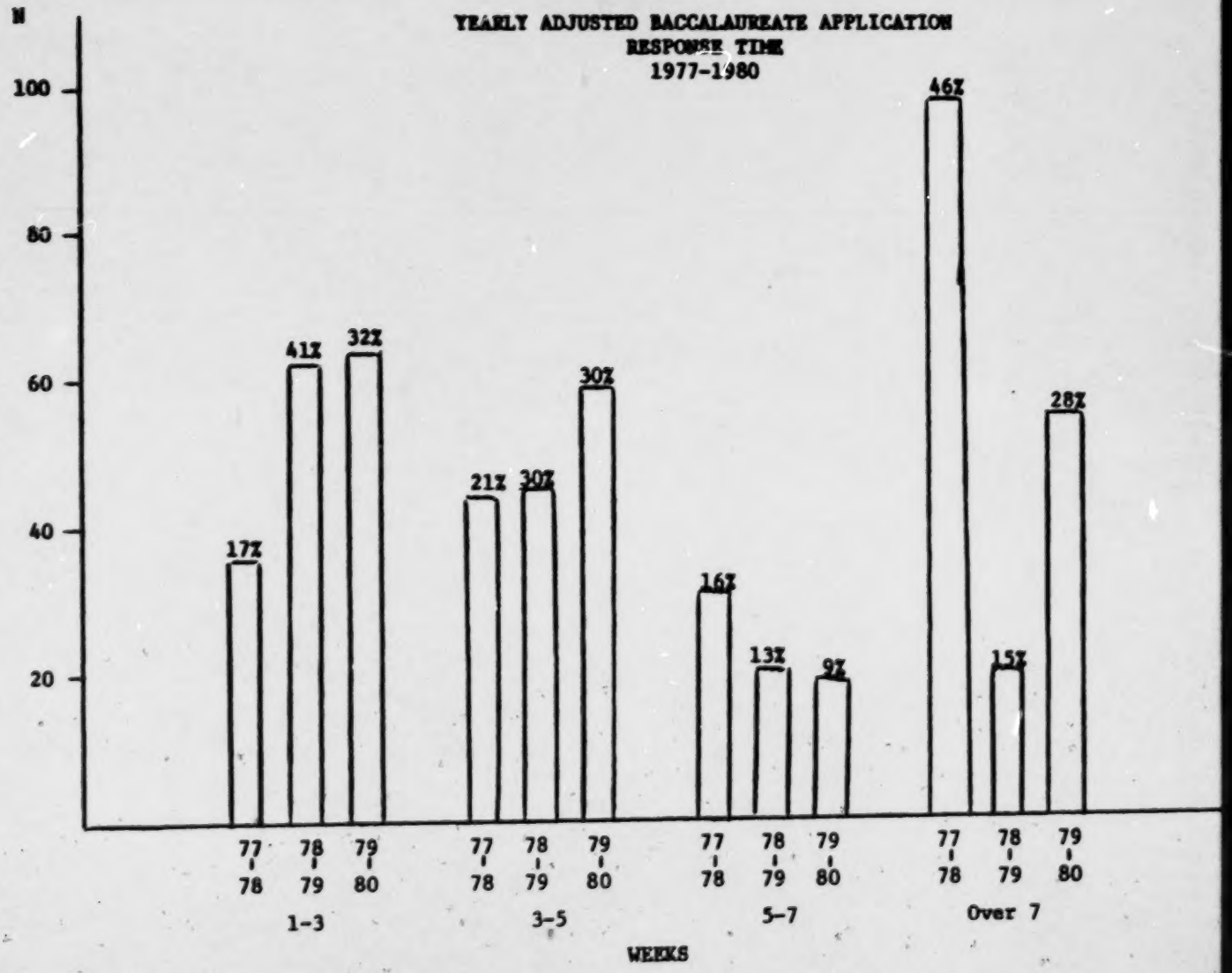
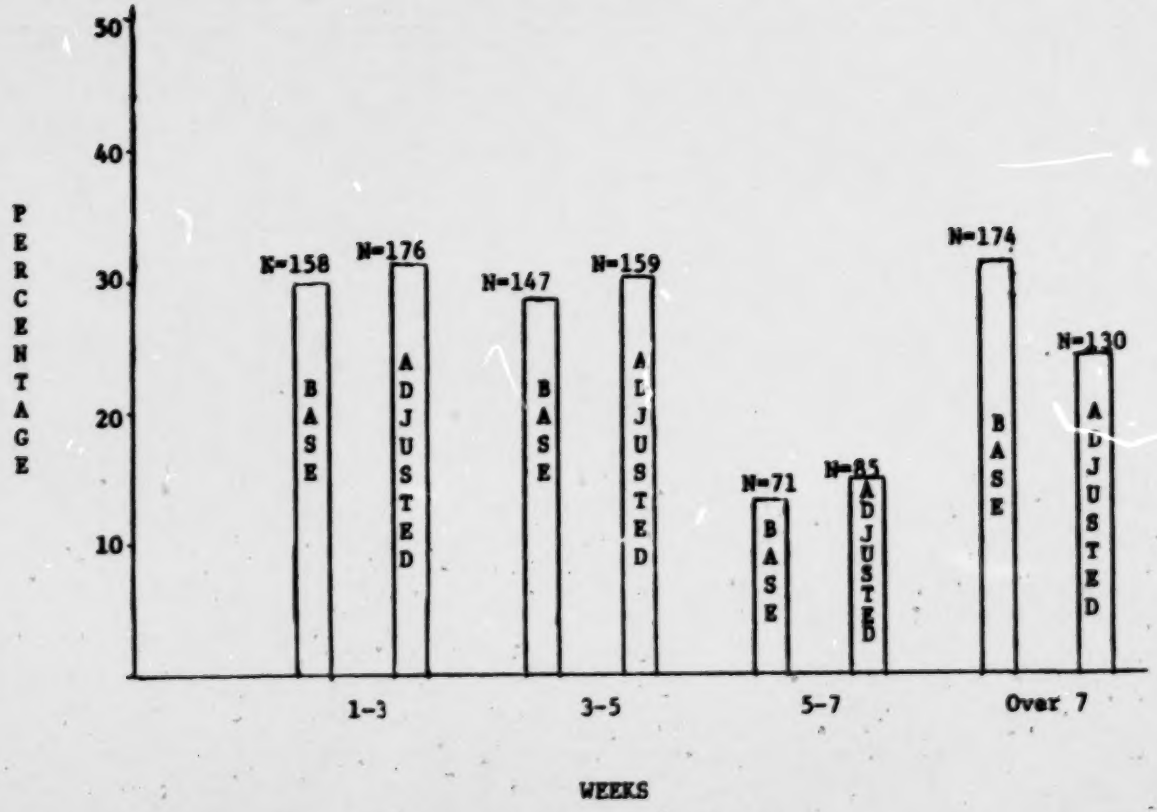

YEARLY ADJUSTED BACCALAUREATE APPLICATION
RESPONSE TIME
1977-1980
N
100
80
60
40
20
NO. OF STUDENTS
17%
41%
32%
21%
30%
30%
16%
13%
9%
46%
15%
28%
77
78
78
79
79
80
1-3
3-5
5-7
Over 7
WEEKS

Figure 9

COMPOSITE APPLICATION
RESPONSE TIME
1977-1980



reflecting a more accurate assessment of what factor of total applications processed within a particular year fell within a weekly category.

Concluding the reported process time survey were composite entries for each weekly category covering the twelve quarters studied, presenting an overall picture of admissions review turn-around time.

2. Discussion of Admission Response Time Data

How long does it take to move an application through the admissions process? Over a period of time, do these figures vary significantly? Is the admissions review process a hopelessly bogged down, entangled mess with delays of a quarter or more not uncommon?

The data contained in Table Two and Charts Eight and Nine clearly show that over the years studied, application response time dramatically improved. By the final year for which data were collected, applications completed the review process in a markedly shorter time, either from a BASE or an ADJUSTED perspective.

Since it is contended, based upon the explanation of BASE vis-a-vis ADJUSTED response time mentioned in Appendix B, that ADJUSTED TIME is a more realistic, reasonable and fair assessment of turn-around time, it is that statistical measure that will provide the basis for the following discussion.

Over the first year of the study, 37 applications (18% of the total processed) completed the admission review process by the third week of review. By the last year of the study, applications completing the admission process by the third week had increased 102% to 75 (a 39% share of the total submitted for review, representing a 116% increase in the portion of applications falling into this category).

Applications completing the admission review process by the fifth week also increased sharply over the study years. In 1977-78, 23% of the applications received (49) had completed review by the fifth week. For 1979-80, that figure had risen 48% to 34% (a 33% gain - to 65 - in the number of applications falling in this category).

Looking at weekly categories one and two combined, 41% of applications (86) had completed the admissions process by the fifth week during the first year of study. By 1979-80, 140 applications (73% of the total submitted for review) had finished the review process by the fifth week, a 78% increase in the number of applications processed within that time and a near 80% increase in the percentage of total applications falling into this grouping.

Associated with this dramatic increase in number and proportion of applications completing the admission process by the fifth week of review occurred a corresponding decline in the number and portion of applications failing to complete the review process by that time. In 1977-78, 37 applications were included in the 5-7 week category (18% of the total processed). By 1979-80, that figure had dropped 35% to 24, representing a 28% decline

(to 13%) in the proportion of applications not completing the admissions process by the seventh week of review. A similar decrease in the number and percentage of applications placed in the over-seven-week category occurred over the study years. For the first year of the study, it took over seven weeks to process 86 applications (41% of the total for that year) while for the last year of the study, 28 applications (a 67% decline) were included in this category, a 63% drop (to 14%) in the portion of applications for this group.

Viewing admission response time through categories 1-3, 59% of the applications (123) were reviewed by the seventh week of the admission process during 1977-78. That figure had increased 44% to 86% of applications received falling into this grouping (a 33% increase in the number of applications to 164) by the last year of the study.

The overall picture of response time, based on a composite analysis of the study years, shows that 61% of the applications completed the review process by the fifth week. Another 15% had completed the process by the seventh week of review, leaving 24% of the applications still within the review process beyond the seventh week.

Concluding the discussion of application response time, the data reveal a distinct relationship when comparing turn-around time to total number of applications submitted for review. With declines in the number of applications received, occurred a parallel reduction in the time taken to process them. Contrast the 1977-78 response time data, the study year in which most applications were received, to the response time data for 1978-79, during which the fewest applications over the study years were received. With a 29% drop in total applications submitted for review (a decline of 60 applications) came a 51% increase (from 59% to 89%) in the portion of applications completing the review process by the seventh week. The following study year, however, with 43 (a 29% increase) more applications submitted, the percentage of applications falling into this category grouping had dropped 3% points to 86%.

The year 1977-78 was one of significant change for Baccalaureate Programs. The previous year saw the implimentation of new policy guidelines. In 1977-78, a new admissions structure (separate divisional admissions committees replacing a single, College committee), was put in place. New committee members were thus adjusting to a new substantive and procedural structure. Various bugs had to be worked out. As the committees became more familiar with their new roles, as they became more proficient at interpreting and applying the "1976 Guidelines," and as the quality of programs improved, the time taken to reach an admission decision and make an advisor assignment, no doubt, was shortened.

Although the time span covered in compiling the application response time data is too limited to report on trends and relationship patterns with great reliability, certain correlations do emerge from the data. Reliable confirmation of these apparent relationships awaits further study over the coming years.

C. Baccalaureate Graduation and Advisor Service Loads

1. Explanation of Data Presentation Format

The third and final major area of statistical inquiry reported in this study is Baccalaureate graduation and Advisor-Service loads, reported in Tables Three and Four and Figures Ten-Fourteen. From July 1, 1976, through June 30, 1980, number of students graduating each year was reported for both the College and its teaching divisions. These data were translated into divisional percentages representing the proportion of the annual College graduation load borne by each teaching division. A composite divisional graduation picture was also reported for the same statistical categories.

An Advising Service Load for both the College and each teaching division, covering the same time period, was determined by first calculating and reporting an Advising Flow (admits plus graduates). This figure was divided by the number of advisors available to service Baccalaureate students to arrive at composite and average yearly College and teaching divisional Advising Service Loads. Divisional advisor availability was calculated by first noting potential advisors available based on all faculty at the assistant professor and above level since, as a general rule, it is only at this employment rank that Baccalaureate advising assignments are made. This pool of potential available advisors was reduced by factors which limit Baccalaureate advising assignments (employment termination, job classification and responsibilities restrictions, etc.) leaving actual available advisors.

The data reported in Table Three will be discussed separately and before the data contained in Table Four.

2. Discussion of Graduation Data

How many students graduate from Baccalaureate programs in a year? How is this College annual graduation load shared among the divisions, both in terms of the number of graduates serviced and the portion of the annual load borne by each division? How do these statistics vary over time?

Table Three and Figure Ten reveal that the number of graduates from Baccalaureate Programs processed by the College dropped 29% for the years studied. From a peak of 110 in 1976-77, graduates declined to 78 for 1979-80. This 29% decrease in program graduates compared to a 12% decline in admissions and a 32% decline in total applications covering the same period.

Divisional analysis of graduation data, reported in Figures Eleven and Twelve, show no convergence patterns, a contrast to the application/admission data discussed earlier. For the years studied, S.B.S. was the only division which had an overall increase in number of graduates serviced. By the last year of the study, S.B.S. was processing 24% more graduates (an increase from 25 to 31) than during the first year of the study. Baccalaureate graduates for S.B.S. rose 56% (from 25 to 39) between 1976 and 1978. Thereafter, graduates dropped 20% to 31 for 1979-80. These figures

Table 3

BACCALAUREATE PROGRAM GRADUATES

		TEACHING DIVISION			COLLEGE
Academic Year		SBS	ACP	SBM	Total
1976-1977	N:	25	17	68	110
	(%)	(23)	(15)	(62)	
1977-1978	N:	39	22	52	113
	(%)	(35)	(19)	(46)	
1978-1979	N:	37	27	33	97
	(%)	(38)	(28)	(34)	
1979-1980	N:	31	14	33	78
	(%)	(40)	(18)	(42)	
Total	N:	132	80	186	398
	(%)	(33)	(20)	(47)	

Table 4

ADVISING FLOW AND SERVICE LOAD
1976-1980

	TEACHING DIVISION			COLLEGE
	SBS	ACP	SBM	Total
ADMITS:	251	143	298	692
GRADUATES:	132	80	186	398
TOTAL FLOW	383	223	484	1090
AVERAGE YEARLY FLOW:	96	56	121	273
AVAILABLE ADVISORS:	13	18	15	46
SERVICE LOAD (Advising Flow ÷ Available Advisors)				
TOTAL	29	12	32	24
ANNUAL	7	3	8	6

Figure 10

ANNUAL BACCALAUREATE GRADUATES
1976-1980

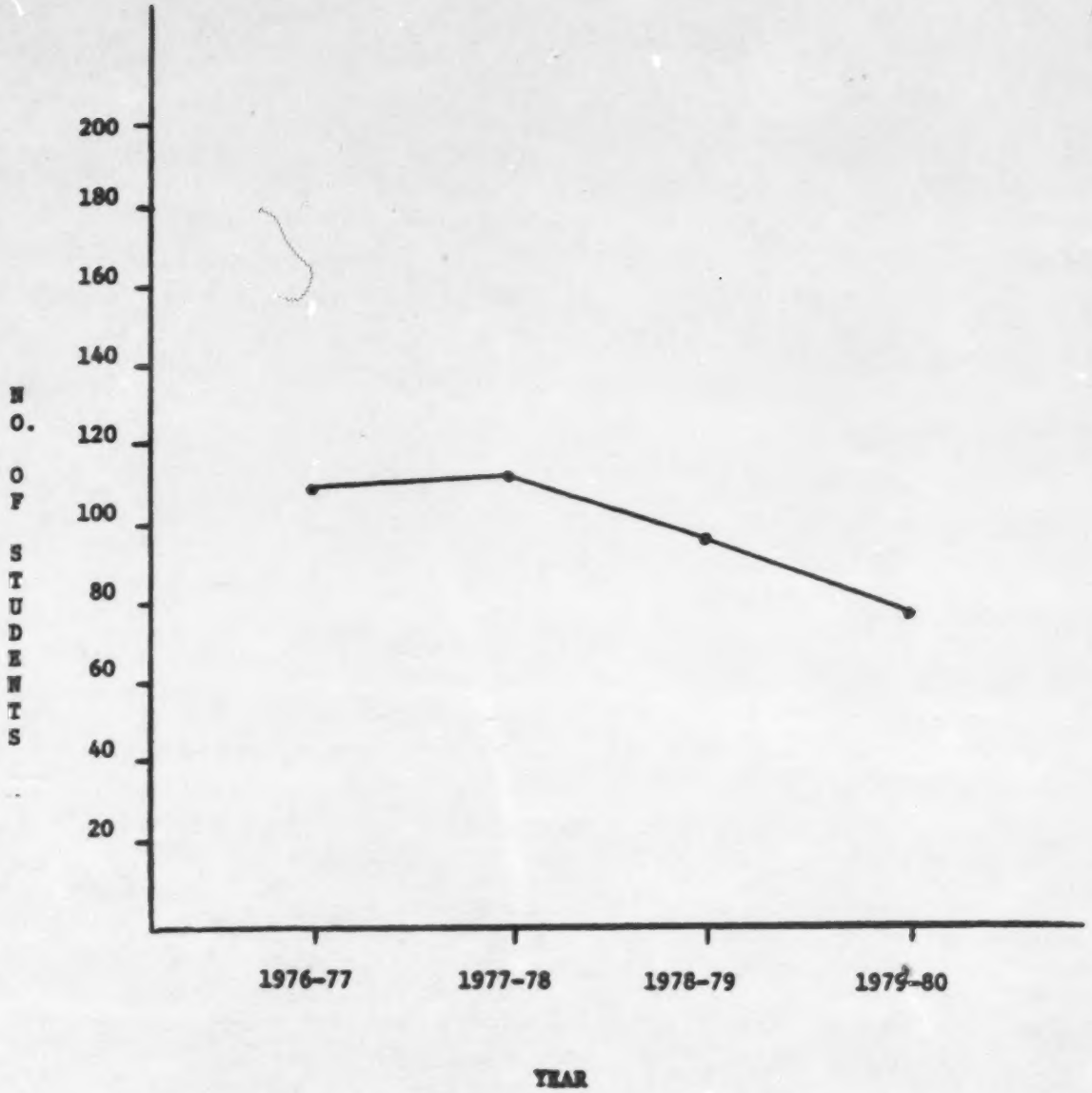


Figure 11

YEARLY BACCALAUREATE GRADUATES
BY TEACHING DIVISION
1976-1980

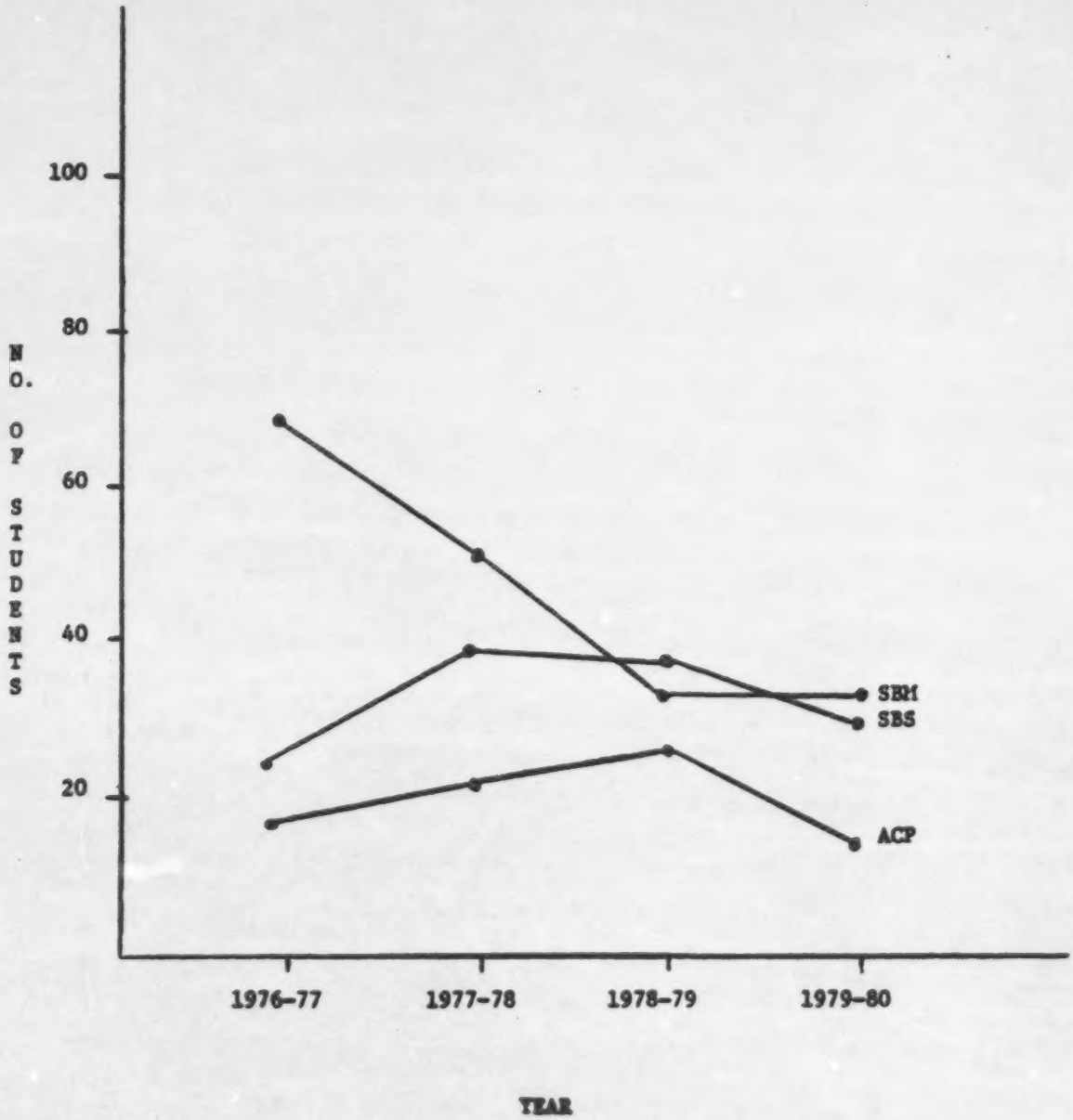
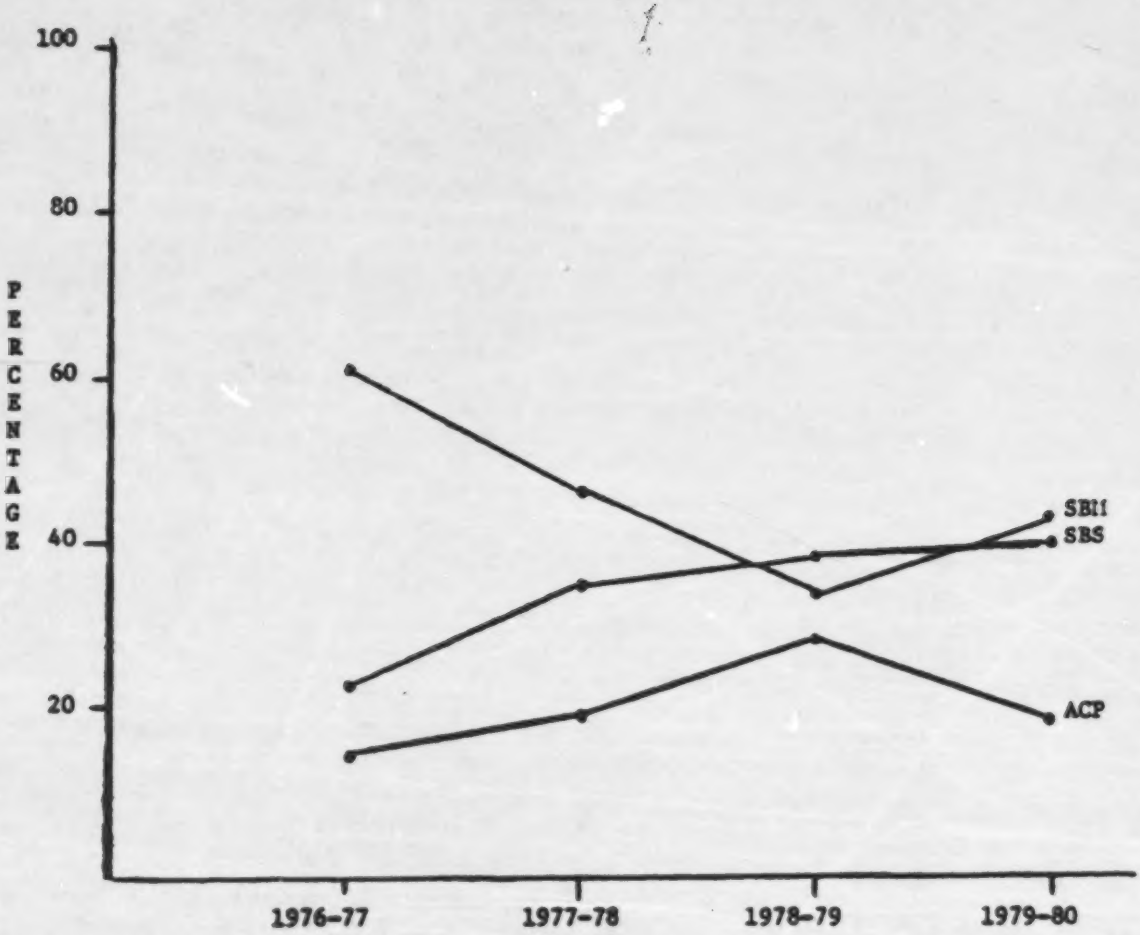


Figure 12

ANNUAL DIVISIONAL DISTRIBUTION
OF BACCALAUREATE GRADUATION LOAD
1976-1980



increase in the annual College graduation load borne by S.B.S., rising from 23% to 40% over the study period. The composite share of the graduation load borne by S.B.S. (33%) was slightly below its admission (36%) and application (34%) load shares.

While S.B.S. experienced an increase in both the number of graduates serviced and its share of the College graduation load, A.C.P. had an overall 18% reduction in its graduates, dropping from 17 to 14 over the span of the study. From 1976 through 1979, A.C.P. had a 59% increase in graduates (rising from 17 to 27). Thereafter, A.C.P.'s number of graduates processed dropped 48% to 14 through 1980. Although A.C.P. experienced a decline in graduates, its share of the annual College graduation load increased 20% (from 15% to 18%). From 1976 (15%) through 1979 (28%), A.C.P.'s share of the College graduation load rose 87%. Over the last year of the study, its share declined 36% (to 18%). The composite share of the College graduation load of A.C.P., at 20%, was nearly the same as its admission (21%) and application (22%) loads.

Similar to the changes experienced by A.C.P., S.B.M. processed fewer graduates by the close of the study. From a peak of 68 in 1976-77, S.B.M. graduates dropped 51% to 33 for 1979-80. This represented an overall decline of 32% in S.B.M.'s share of the College graduation load, which decreased from 62% in 1976-77 to 42% by study's end. The sharpest period of decrease in S.B.M.'s share occurred from 1976 to 1979. Over this period, S.B.M.'s share of the graduation load dropped 45% (from 62% to 34%). Over the last year of the study, however, the share of the graduation load borne by S.B.M. rose (by 23%) to 42%. Similar to the patterns displayed by the other two divisions, S.B.M.'s composite share of the graduation load (47%) was generally the same as its composite admission (43%) and application (44%) loads.

3. Discussion of Advising Flow/Service Load Data

How many admittees and graduates are handled by the College? How is this Advising Flow distributed among the divisions? What is the number of admittees and graduates processed per available advisor for the College? How is this Advisor Service Load shared by the divisions?

The composite all College Advising Flow (admits plus graduates) reported in Table Four was 1090, with an annual average of 273. The number of divisional advisors available to service this load was approximately 46. This left a composite College Advisor Service Load of 24 and an average annual load of 6, as reported in Figure Thirteen.

A divisional breakdown of the same statistics, contained in Figures Thirteen and Fourteen, reveals some interesting facts. Both the lowest composite (223) and yearly average (56) Advising Flows were in A.C.P. At the same time, however, A.C.P. had the largest number of actually available advisors (18) to service its Baccalaureate students. This left A.C.P. a composite Advising Service Load of 12 and a yearly average load of 3, both 50% below the College figure. On the other hand, S.B.M. had the highest total admits and graduates (484) serviced by its advisors as well as the

Figure 13

ADVISER SERVICE LOAD
1976-1980

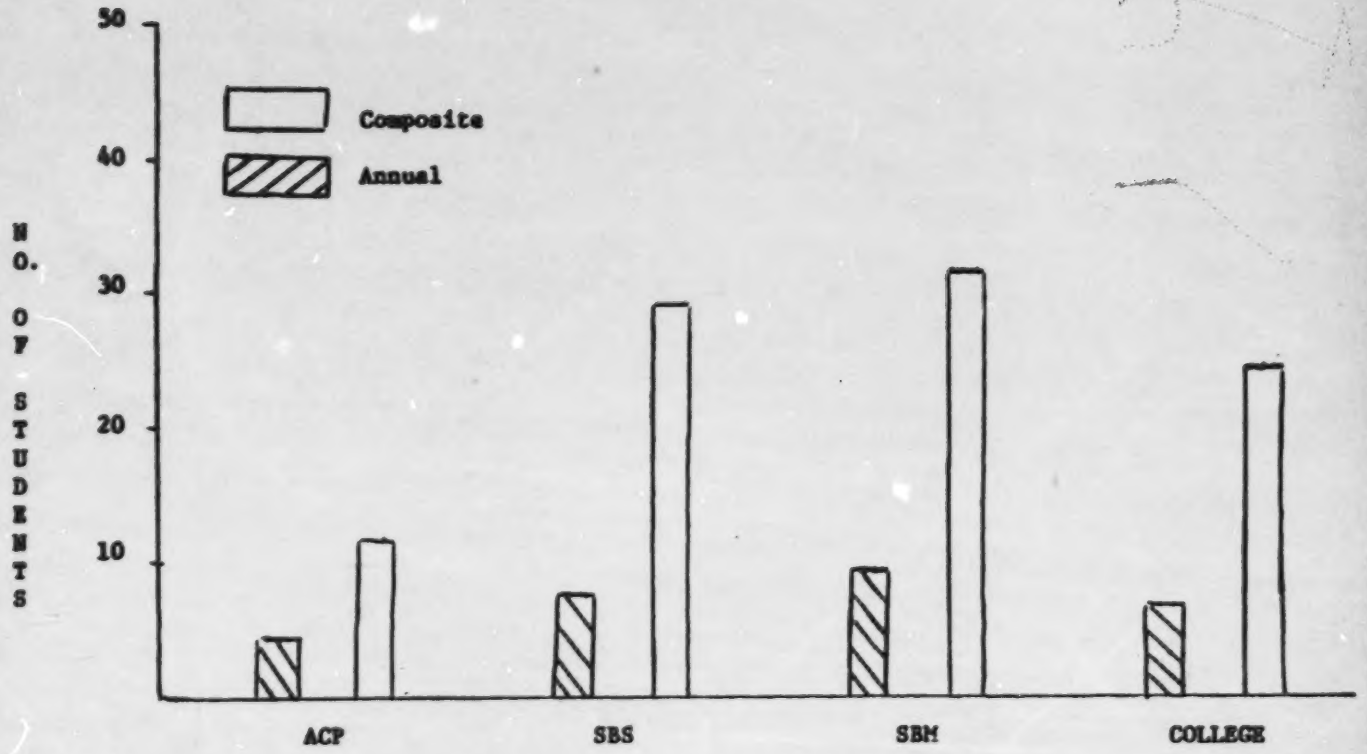
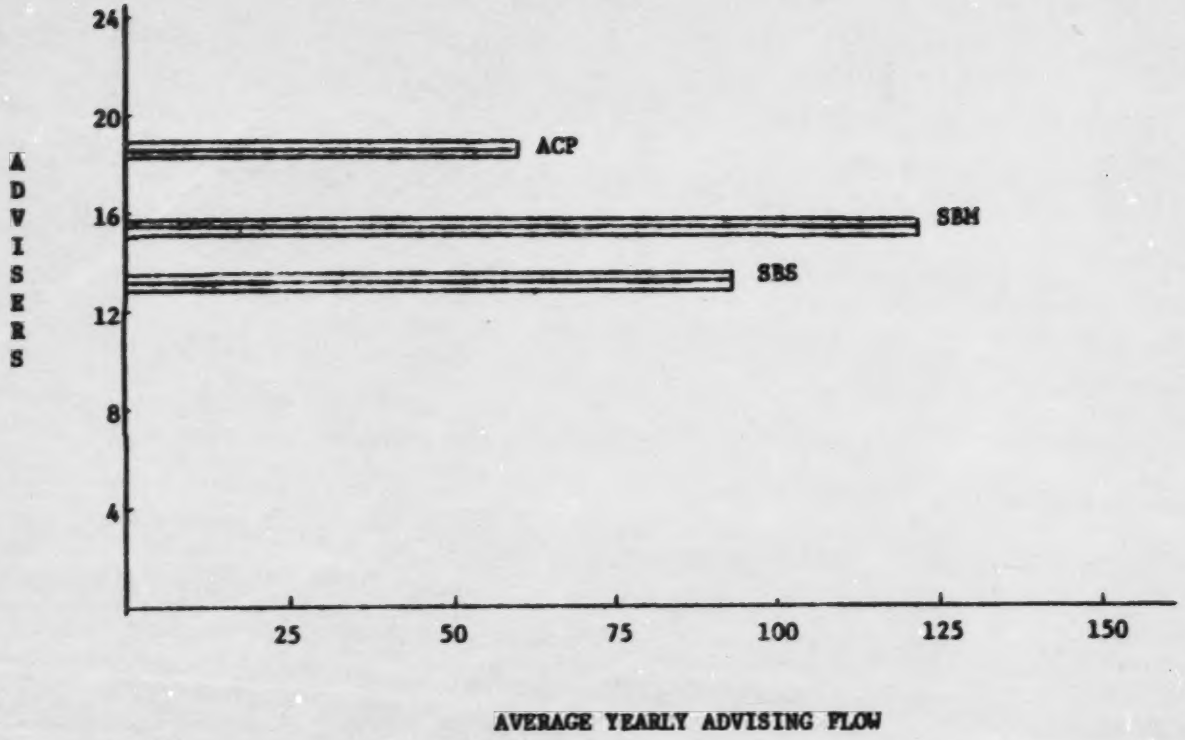


Figure 14

ANNUAL BACCALAUREATE ADVISING FLOW
&
AVAILABLE ADVISERS BY TEACHING DIVISION



highest annual average Advising Flow of 121, a 117% greater load than that of A.C.P. S.B.M. processed this load with 15 advisors, 20% fewer than A.C.P.'s. This translated into a S.B.M. composite Advisor Service Load of 32 and a yearly average load of 8 (both 33% greater than the College load). S.B.S., with the fewest available advisors, 13, (28% fewer than that of A.C.P.) serviced a composite Advising Flow of 383 and a typical annual Flow of 96, a 72% greater load than that borne by A.C.P. These figures represented for S.B.S. a composite Advising Service Load of 29 (21% above the College figure) and an annual average load of 7, 17% above the comparable College load. Comparing Advisor Service Load among the divisions, S.B.M., at 32, had a 10% greater composite load than S.B.S. (29) and a 167% greater load than A.C.P. (12). The Annual Advisor Service Load of S.B.M. (8) was 14% greater than S.B.S.'s (7) and 167% greater than A.C.P.'s (3).

CONCLUSION

The data reported and discussed in this study focused on three major areas of Baccalaureate Programs operation in General College: annual applications data (total application submitted for review, admissions, non-admissions, admissions rates and application load distribution) for both the College and its teaching divisions; admission review response time; and Advising Flow/Service Load from both a College and a teaching-divisional perspective. The study findings provide a reliable data base for accurately understanding past developments and trends in Baccalaureate Programs. This statistical foundation can serve to support informed decision making regarding the future of four-year degree programs in General College as well as help to reduce the chance of misconceptions contaminating that decision-making process. With clearer insight into Baccalaureate Programs, less clouded by myth, proposing, evaluating and implimenting suggested changes in Baccalaureate policies and practices will prove a productive, worthwhile endeavor.

An attempt was made through the research to answer various questions relating to Baccalaureate operations: Do fewer students apply to Baccalaureate Programs than did before? Does General College lose "many" students from its Baccalaureate Program? Is it difficult to gain admittance to Baccalaureate Programs? How is the Baccalaureate applications/admissions load distributed among the divisions? Is the admission review process a "slow, cumbersome hopelessly entangled and bogged down mess with delays of a quarter or more not uncommon?" How many Baccalaureate graduates are processed each year by the College. How is this annual graduation load distributed among the teaching divisions? What is the Advising Flow level and Advisor Service load for the College and its teaching divisions. The research findings provide clear answers to these questions.

College applications data reveal that 32% fewer students sought admission to Baccalaureate Programs over the final year of the study than during its first year. The meaning and causes of this decline are not clear and await further study. During the last year of the study, however, this applications downturn was reversed as a 26% applications upswing occurred. Does this 1979-

80 applications increase foreshadow an upsurge for the coming years or is it merely a temporary lull in the earlier downward trend? Is the one-third applications reduction over the study years a positive or negative development? As applications decreased, annual admissions declined at a significantly slower rate (12% decline) and non-admissions took a percipitous plunge (a 72% reduction). Thus, although one-third fewer applicants sought admission, proportionately more students were admitted over the last year of the study in comparison to the first. Contrasting the 66% admission rate of 1976-77 to the 86% success ratio of 1979-80, the 1980 applicant's chances for admission were 30% greater than the 1976 applicant's. With a composite admission rate of 78%, it is clear that an applicant's chance for admission are excellent. Finally, applications data reveal the possible presence of an unconscious, informal admissions load balancing process. Study findings show admission rates inversely related to application totals. As the latter increased, the former declined. Thus, the 1979-80 26% increase in applications triggered an admission rate slowdown (down to 86% from 94% the previous year) and a 180% increase in the number of non-admissions.

Divisional analysis of applications data also reveal interesting conclusions. Reflecting the College trend, each teaching division processed approximately one-third fewer applications (A.C.P. down 34%, S.B.M. down 26% and S.B.S. down 37%) by study's close in comparison to the first year. A markedly lower decline in divisional admissions (A.C.P. down 3%, S.B.M. down 8% and S.B.S. down 20%) and a dramatic reduction in divisional rejections (A.C.P. dropping 76%, S.B.M. dropping 68% and S.B.S. dropping 78%) indicates that the actual number of admisssions did not drop that significantly over the study. Divisional admission rate changes bear out this conclusion. While this decrease in applications occurred across the teaching divisions, divisional admission rates increased (A.C.P. up 55%, S.B.M. up 23%, and S.B.S. up 25%).

Addressing divisional distribution of the applications load, the data clearly show that advising loads are not equitable. A single teaching division, S.B.M., carried 44% of the application load, a 43% share of the admissions load (with a 50% burden in these areas during some study years) and a 47% share of the annual College graduation load. S.B.M. also processed the greatest number of applications, admitted the most students (but also rejected the most) and had the largest composite and annual Advising Flow levels, all with 15 advisors available to service its load. This left S.B.M. with a composite Advisor Service Load of 32. At the same time, however, another teaching division, A.C.P., with the most actual available advisors (18), had the lowest load burdens in these areas, (a 20% graduation share, a 21% admission share, a 22% application share, half the composite and annual Advising Flow levels of S.B.M.'s as well as the fewest applications processed and admissions), leaving A.C.P. with a composite Advisor Service Load (12) almost one-third that of S.B.M.'s. Such findings necessarily lead to questions. Is S.B.M. adequately staffed to handle this load as well as carry out the full range of teaching/advising/research/service responsibilities expected of its faculty? Are S.B.M. Baccalaureate advisors given worthwhile support, recognition and compensation (financial, promotional, responsibility trade-offs, etc.) for carrying this disproportionate Baccalaureate Programs burden?

The final conclusion that can be drawn from the study results focuses on the belief that processing Baccalaureate applications takes "so long" that

"dire consequences" often befall the student awaiting the admission decision. The twelve quarters of data sampled clearly show that, based on composite ADJUSTED TIME, 76% of applicants receive notice of an admissions decision within seven weeks of submitting an application. That figure has been as high as 85%-89% during individual years. It is submitted that these response times are not a small achievement given the policies and purposes of Baccalureate Programs as well as the application review/advisor assignment process which emphasize individual attention to and evaluation of unique, self-designed programs, all carried out by a teaching, advising, researching, publishing, College and community involved faculty.

The results of this study are the first in a planned series of inquiries into Baccalaureate operations. The next stage is to review operations of other four-year degree programs, both within the University of Minnesota and without, that are similar in scope and design to General College's, and compare research findings. The final stage is to carry the present study forward through 1985, thus producing a decade of Baccalaureate operations data enabling a clear understanding of trends, developments and patterns of change.

APPENDIX A

Sample Card from Baccalaureate Information File

BACCALAUREATE PROGRAM To Adm Comm_____

_____

ID# _____

NAME_____ SS# _____

ADDRESS home_____

present_____

TELEPHONE NO. home_____ DEGREE_____

work_____

DATE ADMITTED_____ NOT ADMITTED_____

CORE TITLE_____

_____

ADVISER_____ GRADUATED_____

APPENDIX B

Data Compilation Procedure

1. Baccalaureate Application Data

The sources relied upon in accumulating the data reported in Table One were Baccalaureate Information File Cards and Committee Action Lists. From July 1, 1976, through the end of June, 1980, the names of all applicants (admits, holds and non-admits) to General College Baccalaureate Programs were taken from Committee Action Lists. These applications were cross referenced to corresponding cards within the Baccalaureate Information Card File. The pertinent information contained in both sources was abstracted, including the teaching division to which the applications were referred for admissions review and possible advisor assignment. In rare cases, when no advisor, admissions review or other teaching division indicator was specifically noted, the core title of the projected program was relied upon to determine probable division assignment. Cross referring Committee Action List entries with information contained in the file cards provided instant validation of the data compiled.

While gathering the data reported in Table One, minor statistical accuracy problems were encountered. Since the data were drawn from hand-kept records, typical problems associated with this method of record keeping arose. The original records contained sporadic omissions. In addition, since the statistics for this study were also manually compiled, the normal problems of such a process occasionally cropped up. In rare cases, double counting, skip-overs, and only partial tabulation occurred. But, with cross-validation between Committee Action Lists and file cards, these extremely rare inaccuracies were discovered and corrected.

Data accuracy problems for Table One also arose from "multiple applications." An applicant originally turned down, or an applicant who, after admissions, would make wholesale program changes, occasionally reapplied to the program. A single applicant could, therefore, be reported two or three times as the application, rejection, program change, reapplication, etc., process played itself out. This multiple contacts problem was quite uncommon, however. It is doubtful whether it produced any systematic bias in the reported results.

A third potential for minor inaccuracy arose from the applicant who, after admission, withdrew from the program and never followed through on a degree plan. There was no way of determining this percentage from the data available at the time of this study. Baccalaureate administrative and clerical staff estimate the incidence of such cases to be quite rare.

2. Application Response Time

The information sources relied upon to compile the data reported in Table Two were the Baccalaureate Information Card File and Committee Action Lists.

Commencing with Summer Session, 1977, and carrying through consecutive, subsequent academic quarters to the end of Spring, 1980, the records for all admits and non-admits (total applications processed) occurring within a quarter were retrieved from the Baccalaureate Committee Action List. Information File Cards for applicants were used to record the date when an application had been received by the Baccalaureate Programs clerical office. Also noted on the cards were the dates official action was taken by an admission committee. This latter date, cross-validated by reference to identical entries on the Committee Action List, was consistently the date when a letter from the Baccalaureate Programs Office was sent to the applicant, communicating the official decision of the admission committee. The time difference between the date an application was received and the date a letter was sent to an applicant constituted raw process time - BASE RESPONSE TIME - reported in Table Two and entered in one of three weekly categories which subdivided the study years: 0-3 weeks; 3-5 weeks; 5-7 weeks; and over 7 weeks.

A significant problem faced in compiling the statistics reported in Table Two was determining whether BASE RESPONSE TIME was an accurate and meaningful measurement. Although the figure did indicate the total time applications remained within the Baccalaureate admissions review process, it did not, in all cases, reflect a realistic assessment of the time during which admission committees actually had a real opportunity to review applications. Another measurement, ADJUSTED RESPONSE TIME, was therefore calculated and utilized in situations where BASE RESPONSE TIME had a significantly distorting effect.

During the past few years, the concensus among Baccalaureate administrative staff and College faculty has been that a turnaround time of six weeks is an acceptable performance level at the admissions review stage. Reviews of applications that dragged beyond the seventh week were considered unreasonably delayed. In many cases of over-seven-week process time, however, legitimate reasons are present to explain the delay. The question therefore arises for applications within the over-seven-week category, how many are cases of REAL, inexcusable delay and how many are situations of EXPECTED, excusable delay. Research was pursued to discover why delay had occurred and to determine whether such cause explained why the application appeared in an over-seven-week category.

EXPECTED, excusable delay might occur for various reasons. An application placed on "hold," due to technical or procedural problems, faces a predictable admissions delay until the problems are cleared up. Applications submitted during faculty "down" time (over quarter breaks, during summer, etc.), when admission committee members and potential advisors are not readily available to process applications, will also experience EXPECTED delay. Applications which are received during the last few days of a quarter, when reviewing faculty and potential advisors are preoccupied with the matters that bring a quarter to a close, will face a longer turnaround time. Additionally, multiple contacts cases (explained earlier) would most surely encounter predictable delay.

Given these types of EXPECTED delay, applications that initially fell within the over-seven-week category were cross referenced to corresponding file cards. Based upon relevant information contained in the file cards, it

was determined whether applicants belonged in a REAL or EXPECTED delay category. For applicants who experienced EXPECTED delay, an adjustment was made in measuring response time. Application receipt date was disregarded as the starting point for computing turnaround time. Instead, the date that the admissions review committee could be reasonably expected to have the opportunity to review applications was substituted. Thus, applications received over quarter break, after second Summer Session, or during the last few days of a quarter, were treated as having been received during the first week of the immediately following academic quarter. In multiple contacts cases, where a reapplication date was available from the records, that date was used for measuring turnaround time. In those few multiple contacts situations where no reapplication date was available from the records, the data were excluded since they could not be accurately coded.

The process used to identify cases of EXPECTED delay, included initially in the over-seven-week category, constituted the mechanism by which ADJUSTED RESPONE TIME was determined. EXPECTED delays were subtracted from the over-seven-week category and reassigned to an earlier, more accurate, ADJUSTED TIME category. The difference remaining in the over-seven-week category therefore constituted a more accurate reflection of applications that experienced REAL delay.

In gathering the data reported in Table Two, several minor problems were encountered which affected statistical accuracy. In some very rare cases, after noting the date on which official committee action was taken (reported in the Committee Action List), upon cross validating the application with the Information Card File, it was discovered that no application-received date had been recorded. There was no alternative source from which that information could be gained. In such extremely rare situations, the information was excluded as impossible to calculate.

Another area of potential inaccuracy occurred with multiple-contacts applications. Although extremely uncommon, these situations posed a vexing problem. Initial non-admittance process time was readily calculatable. However, with subsequent reapplications, occasionally only the official action of the review committee would be recorded. No date on which the reapplication had been submitted was recorded. These data were excluded from Table Two since process time could not be computed with reasonable preciseness without knowing the date a reapplication had been received.

Finally, since the statistics reported in Table Two were manual tabulations retrieved from hand maintained raw records, the oversights, omissions, and other breakdowns characteristic of this data retrieval method and record keeping system mentioned earlier might have occurred. These accuracy difficulties were quite insignificant, however, due to the cross-validation built into the data retrieval process.

3. Graduation Flow and Advising Service Load

Data sources utilized to compile the information reported in Tables Three and Four covering the period from July 1, 1976, to June 30, 1980, were Baccalaureate Committee Action Lists, Baccalaureate Graduation Lists, and Baccalau-

reate Information File Cards. Admissions to Baccalaureate Programs along with division assignment were noted from Committee Action Lists. Data were cross referred to the Card File for each admitted applicant. From both these records, divisional housing of admitted programs was readily determinable from the information (name of the advisor or title of the program) noted in both sources. Graduates per teaching division and for the College were compiled by information contained in Baccalaureate Graduation Lists with cross reference to Information File Cards.

While compiling the statistics contained in Tables Three and Four, several accuracy problems were experienced. Occasionally, the faculty member officially assigned as advisor to a program admittee was not the faculty member who actually guided the student through to graduation. Advisor assignments recorded in the Graduation or Committee Action Lists, or the Information Card File, were not fool-proof indicators of program divisional housing. However, in such cases of little or no student contact with the officially assigned advisor, the unofficial advisor usually came from the same division as the advisor of record, primarily due to reasons of program theme and content as well as divisional expertise. Therefore, division assignment accuracy was not significantly distorted by unofficial advisor guidance. The explanations for limited offical advisor contact were usually the following: advisor absence due to Summer Session downtime, illness, departure from employment or faculty leave; lack of expertise; personality conflicts; and other predictable occurances.

Another potential advisor/division assignment inaccuracy occurred in those extremely rare cases when no advisor assignment was recorded in the data bases. In these situations, program title, if available through the Information Card File, was utilized to indicate probable division assignment based upon program theme/content and faculty expertise. Otherwise, the data were excluded since they were not accurately reportable.

Finally, since Tables Three and Four report advising and graduation flow only for the last four years of Baccalaureate Program operations, graduates during the years studied cannot be subtracted from program admittees to produce an accurate net advising flow. Since Baccalaureate Programs has been operating in General College since 1970-71, graduates during the immediate study years were not necessarily admits during that time, but were, in many cases, admittees during the years of program operation prior to the study.